Commentary

VOLUME EIGHTY-ONE • NUMBER THREE • MARCH 1986

In Occupied Poland
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Naked Racial Preference
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Son, Father, Judge–A Story
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Books in Review: Richard John Neuhaus on Reinhold Niebuhr
Gerald M. Steinberg/Daniel Casse/Edward Pearce/Eric M. Breindel

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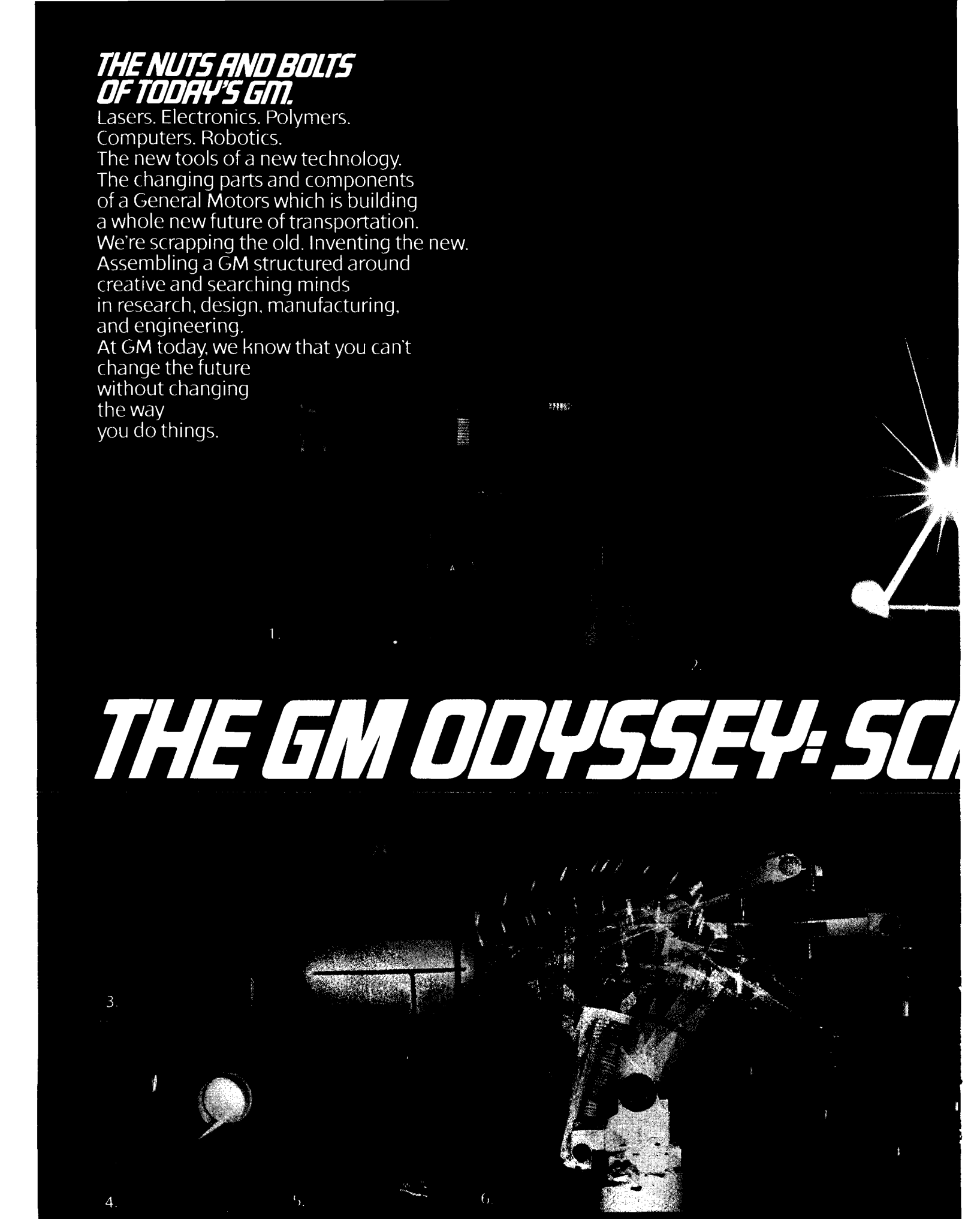

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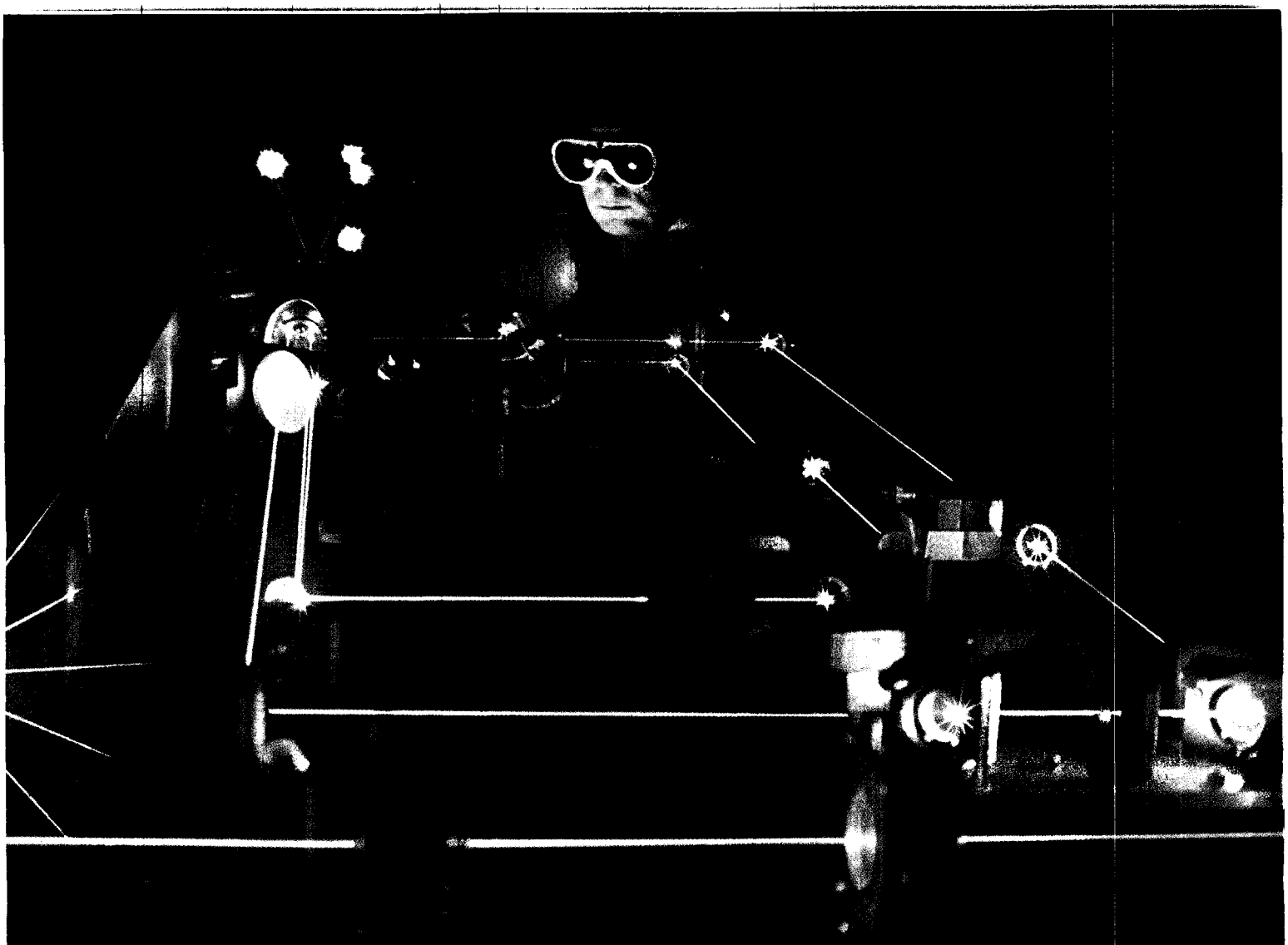

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Commentary

VOLUME 81 NUMBER THREE *MARCH 1986*

Articles	15	In Occupied Poland *Martin Krygier*
	24	Naked Racial Preference *Carl Cohen*
	40	Vietnam: How We Deceived Ourselves *Doan Van Toai*
Story	32	Son, Father, Judge *Hanoch Bartov*
Observations	44	Back to Criminal Psychology *Joseph Adelson*
	47	Truffaut & Other Auteurs *Richard Grenier*
Fiction	53	E.L. Doctorow's "Jewish" Radicalism *Carol Iannone*
Letters	4	from *Michael David Blume, Eugen Loebl, Jocelyn Tomkin, Douglas H. Schewe, Michael Levin, Elias M. Schwarzbart, Michael Borge, George Jochnowitz, Werner J. Dannhauser, Lev Navrozov, Roberta Kalechofsky, Ira Silverman, Ronald Bailey, Julian Bond, Glenn C. Loury,* and others
Books in Review	58	Reinhold Niebuhr: A Biography, by Richard Fox *Richard John Neuhaus*
	64	Star Warriors, by William J. Broad *Gerald M. Steinberg*
	66	My Father, His Daughter, by Yäel Dayan *Daniel Casse*
	68	Pétain: Hero or Traitor?, by Herbert R. Lottman *Edward Pearce*
	70	Politics, by Edward I. Koch with William Rauch *Eric M. Breindel*

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COMMENTARY (ISSN 0010-2601) is published monthly by the American Jewish Committee—Single copy is $3.25, $33 a year; 3 years $89; 5 years $132—Add $5.00 per year for all foreign, including Canada and Latin America—Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to COMMENTARY, 165 East 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022.
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EDITORIAL & BUSINESS OFFICES: 165 E. 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022

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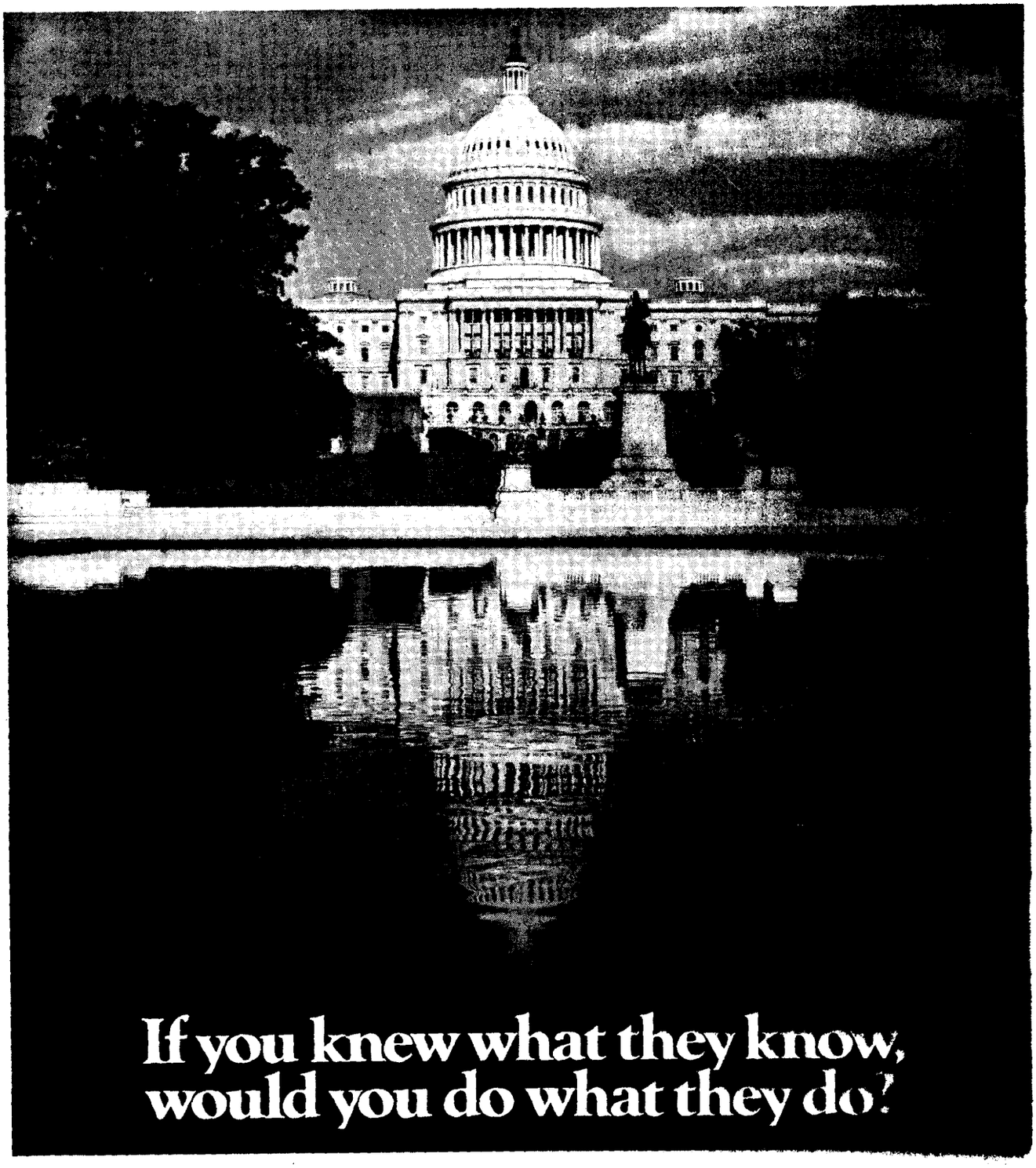

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Letters from Readers

Symposium

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

COMMENTARY's 40th-anniversary symposium, "How Has the United States Met Its Major Challenges Since 1945?" [November 1985], is a worthy contribution to public discussion by a magazine from which we have become accustomed to expect much, but what it reveals about the weaknesses of the Center-Right coalition of "responsible" conservatives, neoconservatives, "cold-war" liberals, and others of that ilk is somewhat disturbing, at least to me. . . .

Daniel Patrick Moynihan, whose style of writing is lively and therefore cheering, nevertheless is on my list of disquieting contributors to the symposium. Most importantly I would mention his NYU commencement address, quoted at the end of his contribution. His truth is that "the Soviet idea is spent. It commands some influence in the world; and fear. But it summons no loyalty." Daniel Ortega, Fidel Castro, General Jaruzelski, *et al.* might be surprised at these assertions. And since they and their cadres wield and expand their control over subject populations through economic manipulation and police-state terrorism, it makes very little difference whether "the Soviet idea" commands widespread loyalty. Fear will do quite well enough, thank you.

Senator Moynihan asks these questions: "Are there Marxist-Leninists here and about in the world? Yes: especially when the West allows Communism to identify with nationalism. But in truth, when they do succeed, how well do they do? And for how long?" In creating a just and prosperous society, they succeed not at all. In torturing their societies into submission, they succeed rather well. And for a long time, as witness the USSR, the People's Republic of China, North Korea, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Vietnam, Cuba, etc., etc., ad nauseam.

With these views it is unsurprising that Senator Moynihan should assert that "our grand strategy should be to wait out the Soviet Union." Unfortunately, that is not a strategy at all when one's adversary is dynamic and persistent. It represents merely the senescence of the policy of containment. "The historical outcome is certain," Senator Moynihan informs us, "*if* we can keep the nuclear peace and attend to our own arrangements in a manner that they continue to improve." In other words, we should sit quietly at home, tinker with the plumbing, keep the burglar alarm in good repair, and safely await the passing away of lawless marauders in the streets which shall surely come. . . .

Obviously, this is a willful exaggeration of Senator Moynihan's drift. But the drift is there. . . . What is particularly disturbing to me in . . . Senator Moynihan's remarks is that he is reputed to be strong on defense. Perhaps, as in the case of the *New Jersey*—which he tells us he voted to bring back into the fleet "because she is so damn beautiful"—this is primarily for aesthetic reasons.

In a similar manner, Nathan Glazer, examiner of liberal platitudes as co-editor of the *Public Interest*, disappoints with his head-scratching over Soviet-American relations. The whole business is quite bemusing to him. "The bases for hostility are not sufficient in themselves to lead to the build-up of such terrible weapons, but once they exist their awesome power leads to ever greater distrust. . . . We are impelled to make Soviet Russian reality and intentions and ideology even more awful than they are. We are forced into a process of demonization in order to justify the hell our conflict may lead to." Liberal platitudes, anyone?

One begins to ask, just what is going on here? Did I pick up a copy of the *New Republic* by mistake? In virtue of what is this man a neoconservative? Because he is willing to *listen* to Edward Luttwak?

Mr. Glazer tells us: "The issue here is not that the Soviet leaders have a missionary intention to spread Marxism-Leninism throughout the world. They do not have the manner of missionaries, of impassioned advocates of their ideals. They are no Khomeinis. Nor can they be unaware of the decline of Communism in Western Europe and Japan, and its inability to make any headway in the United States." Mr. Glazer seems wholly unaware that Marxism-Leninism is not by any means a mass movement, except incidentally for tac-

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tical considerations, and therefore it is useless to peer about for showboaters equivalent to Khomeini, or to judge its strength by its popularity. If he would read Lenin's *The State and Revolution,* he would discover that Leninism is essentially conspiratorial, based on tight party discipline and the achievement of power by any available means. . . .

I turn next, appropriately enough, to Mr. Glazer's co-editor at the *Public Interest,* Irving Kristol. I was most struck with the end of his contribution, and somewhat disagreeably at that. Mr. Kristol describes the emergent consensus he foresees under three heads: (1) a commitment to economic growth; (2) the resurgence of patriotism; (3) a renewed emphasis on moral and religious traditions. He then says: "There will be many who will be acutely depressed at the thought of any such shape-of-things to come. I myself am not absolutely certain that, were I around, I'd like it all that much. But the dissolution of a sovereign liberal ideology is now well under way, and rather than sterile lamentations one ought to be thinking along the lines of a positive reconstruction." . . .

But surely the sovereign liberal ideology was not, until very recently, against a dynamic economy (however counterproductive many of its policies), nor was it unpatriotic or amoral. I take the sovereign liberal ideology to have been that represented by sovereign liberals, i.e., men like Lyndon Johnson, Hubert Humphrey, and Jack Kennedy. Such men would not have been acutely depressed at a more prosperous, patriotic, and upright America. Mr. Kristol is, oddly enough, taking as normal the peripheral *Weltanschauung* of academic leftists, and confusing it with the liberal tradition, now in dissolution. . . .

It is only among the intellectuals, primarily those associated with elite institutions, that matters stand at such a pass. Everyone else is debating how best to promote economic growth, how best to promote our national well-being, and what policy alternatives are most in conformity with Western values. Because intellectuals do have some influence, it is valuable to persuade them to accept the mainstream consensus and get involved in the relevant debates. . . .

MICHAEL DAVID BLUME
Annapolis, Maryland

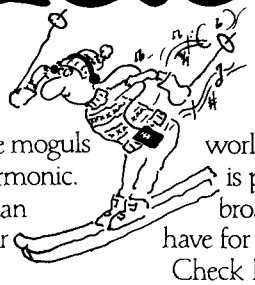
TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In the 40th-anniversary symposium, twenty-nine distinguished intellectuals expressed their views on how the United States has made use of its "giant's strength" since 1945. But only one of them, Michael Novak, discovered that the emperor has no clothes—that in reality there is no giant's strength at all. As Mr. Novak put it, "the worst failure of American political culture has been a failure of moral intellect" which has "worn down the very citadel of liberty itself, the human mind." . . .

When Elliot Cohen wrote the statement on which the symposium was based, the United States had already lost its giant's strength. It was a giant as long as it united its political, economic, and military strength with moral values, as it did in the Atlantic Charter in which it committed itself and even the Soviet Union to respect the right of self-determination of nations and pledged not to seek territorial aggrandizement and not to interfere with the freedom of other nations. But when it replaced those principles with the destructive policy of superpower spheres of interest, it lost its giant's strength. . . . There is not the slightest doubt, however, that the American people remained faithful to the very essence of their history and never abandoned the ideal of freedom. Mr. Novak explains this phenomenon: "The moral clarity of the American people is sharper than that of the American elites." . . .

As a matter of fact, America's "giant's strength" has been revived —though this great event occurred after the symposium contributions had been written. On October 19, 1985, in his address to the American nation, and on October 24, in a speech to the General Assembly of the United Nations, President Reagan again united America's political, economic, and military strength with moral values. In essence Mr. Reagan declared that mankind's creative genius should not be used for offensive weapons to take lives but for defensive weapons to prevent deaths. At the same time he referred to Article 2

Ski Strauss



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of the United Nations Charter (actually the Atlantic Charter) which committed member states to refrain "from the use or threat of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state."

To tie defense and disarmament, i.e., peace, to freedom and use the tremendous economic potential of America for the betterment of all peoples—these imperatives called for by the President would no doubt be approved by the overwhelming majority of the American people and those of the Atlantic alliance as well as of the Third World. I am sure that the peoples of the Soviet bloc would also react very positively. Thus, if the President's message were put into effect a new political reality would emerge which the Soviet government would then have to take into account.

This was a unique occasion to bring these ideas home to the people of the world. After so many years of propagating low political culture, one might have expected that the American mass media would attempt to make people aware that the only realistic avenue to a safe and humane future would be to tie freedom to peace and peace to freedom. This would have mobilized the American people, and the President would have left for Geneva with a clear mandate. Instead, exactly the opposite took place. Not only was such an attempt not made, but views were expressed that freedom is not even supposed to be a concern of our government. For example, George F. Kennan, in the New York *Times* (November 3, 1985), wrote: ". . . Leave the cause of human freedom to the power of example and to the graces of that gentle and gradual historical evolution that is actually the only way, if any, by which lasting progress toward freedom can be achieved."

Such ideas were also explicitly expressed in some of the contributions to the COMMENTARY symposium and implied in others. But there cannot be peace without freedom or freedom without peace. This is the political message the President of the United States expressed to the highest political body of our day.

It seems to me that another symposium is now due: how to transform the giant's strength into concrete foreign policy.

EUGEN LOEBL

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Walter Berns opens his contribution to the symposium with some criticism of the sheltered life, and privileges, of the English aristocracy. The word "aristocracy" brings to mind faded or extinct European monarchies and an implicit assumption that this form of government has all but passed into history. This is a great mistake.

If we are to consider how the U.S. has met its major challenges since 1945, we would do well to consider another aristocracy. Its members don't have valets to put toothpaste on their toothbrushes, but they do have maidservants and chauffeurs who spy on them; its members don't ride on horseback or in Rolls-Royces, rather they speed through the deserted streets in bullet-proof limousines; its members rule not by hereditary right but by fear; and while the aristocracies of old never spoke of equality, this aristocracy speaks of it incessantly.

The aristocracy in question is the ruling elite of the Soviet empire. . . . It is a small ruling class whose power is based not on ownership of land, as was that of the ancient aristocracies, but on the modern keys to power: control of the military, of communications, of information, and of the means of production. . . .

Robert Nisbet closes his contribution to the symposium by quoting Tocqueville's prediction that America and Russia would be the two superpowers of the future. Tocqueville also stated the political difference between America and Russia, which still holds today: "The principal instrument of the former is freedom; of the latter, servitude." In 1835 neither Tocqueville nor anyone else could have foreseen the emergence of technology and how, as a result, each of the two superpowers would not only "sway the destinies of half the globe," but would also confront each other. Confrontations are eventually, after a shorter or longer time, resolved in favor of one side or the other. The central question of our time is: will this confrontation be resolved in favor of freedom or servitude? . . .

JOCELYN TOMKIN

Austin, Texas

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his symposium contribution, Joseph Epstein raised questions of particular interest to me as a teacher of adult reading. Why is it, I wondered, that university students do not read or express the viewpoints of COMMENTARY? After all, the magazine is so eminently readable, so very literate. One reason is, of course, as Mr. Epstein observes, the ever-present threat of intimidation. If the head of a department quails at calling himself "chairman," where does this put the student? But might not a second reason be a failure of our nation to achieve the "genuine literacy" mentioned by William Barrett?

Thinking of using *Newsweek*'s educational package for teaching adults to read college material, I asked for the readability range of the publication. "Oh, the eighth-grade level," I was told. "If not, university students couldn't understand it."

Little wonder, then, that the university remains an isolated leftist bastion. To express significant current issues at an eighth-grade level requires oversimplification of many of life's complexities. Academic isolation prevails in part, I suggest, because many students cannot read or write well enough to refute what Michael Novak terms the "failure of moral intellect" on our campuses. . . .

This perhaps is also the reason "the moral clarity of the American people," which Mr. Novak claims "is sharper than that of American elites," is not heard throughout the land. Sophisticated moral clarity requires an enlarged vocabulary and the utilization of various rhetorical devices to express the nuances of a modern, complex, interconnected, diverse world. . . . The reasoned voice remains the classic voice crying in the wilderness, the wilderness of a mass culture without "genuine literacy."

DOUGLAS H. SCHEWE

Madison, Wisconsin

The Jewish Vote

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have been following with great interest the series of articles you have recently published concerning the Jewish response to the current political climate, a series that includes the excellent and witty article by Milton Himmelfarb, "Another Look at the Jewish Vote" [December 1985]. Some points of the debate seem to me confused, however, and, when clarified, make the case presented by

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Mr. Himmelfarb, Irving Kristol ["The Political Dilemma of American Jews," July 1984], and others stronger still.

A theme that runs through these essays is the need for Jews to relinquish their ethical universalism and recognize that they too form a specific voting population with specific concerns. It is argued, for instance, that Jews must jettison their largely sentimental attachment to racial "goals" and recognize that quotas harm Jewish interests. In fact, however, it is liberalism that has jettisoned universalistic values, at least in this instance, and conservative Jews who seek to recapture universalism. There is nothing "universalistic" in the desire to see some subgroups receive special favors; on the contrary, the desire that all play and succeed or fail by the same rules is the essence of ethical universalism, whether of the Jewish or Kantian sort. Conservative Jews can lay a most plausible claim to that fabled high ground of morality if they make this quite clear.

Speaking more generally, it is a mistake in both fact and rhetoric to represent the issue as one of tough-mindedness versus high-mindedness. Jews who refuse to support military spending—although it is vital for Israel's security and indeed for the security of Jews in America—and Jews who find excuses for Jesse Jackson are refusing to stand up for their *rights*. Israel has a right to exist in peace; Jews in America have a right to equal protection of the law. None of this has anything to do with Jewish interests, and to urge these things is not to apply interest-group pressure: it is to insist upon what one is already entitled to. Conversely, Jews who will not endorse these positions (or who refuse to vote for those who do) are like children who willingly submit to the schoolyard bully. Despite their prattle about moral superiority, they seem to be the victim of some sort of psychological disorder. One does not show a superior love of mankind by wearing a sign that says "Kick me."

MICHAEL LEVIN
City College-CUNY
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Once again Milton Himmelfarb has examined what by common wisdom was overexamined and found significant new insights.

As I read his numbers, the clear implication is that for most American Jews the security of Israel simply is not the primary factor determining their vote; most American Jews are not sufficiently Zionist. The factors that do go into determining their vote are far more likely to be those that provide them with a sense of being psychologically comfortable in America: these . . . include a sense of virtue stemming from a concern for the poor and powerless and a concern that religion be as absent as possible from the public sector so that Jews will not be made to feel even more like outsiders than they already do in a society overwhelmingly populated by Christians.

The sad truth to emerge from the article, as Mr. Himmelfarb points out in his conclusion, is that, in the long run, Israel will be the political victim of the voting patterns of American Jews. . . .

LAWRENCE J. EPSTEIN
Suffolk County Community College
Selden, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his analysis of the Jewish vote, Milton Himmelfarb continues to misunderstand what is going on. Mr. Himmelfarb believes that either Jesse Jackson or the need for a strong defense to protect Israel should have logically led Jews to support the Republicans. Never mind the minor point that no one has yet offered this argument who would not have preferred Mr. Reagan and the Republicans anyway. The real problem is that Mr. Himmelfarb assumes voting preferences are based on logic rather than instinct.

While Reverend Jackson's views may be less favorable to Jews than Reverend Falwell's, many Jews instinctively regard them as less threatening. That is because blacks must necessarily perceive themselves as a minority. Reverend Falwell, however, has clearly claimed the rights of a *majority*, and the difference as regards the possible imposition of his values is considerable. The anti-Semitism of blacks does not carry over to whites, in large part because whites correctly see it as anti-white rather than anti-Jewish in origin.

It is, of course, no accident that Reverend Falwell finds his home in the Republican party while Reverend Jackson sides with the Democrats. The philosophical and emotional difference between the two parties for most of this century has been the greater receptivity of the Democrats to the diversity of different ethnic and minority groups. The Republicans, by contrast, supported a homogenized Americanization. I suppose . . . I should also note that in recent years the Democrats have come perilously close to endorsing tribalism, which accounts in no small measure for their getting clobbered at the polls.

The reason Jews remain overwhelmingly Democratic is that, despite all efforts to persuade them that a homogenized America can embrace them too, they still support the ideal of an American embrace of diversity. . . .

All this has nothing whatever to do with rational arguments Mr. Himmelfarb might offer for Jews to vote Republican. It does attempt to explain why Jews feel more emotionally comfortable with the Democrats, so that, when tempted to waver, they need relatively little excuse to return to the fold. . . .

WILLIAM A. BAKER
New York City

Religion

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Reading Werner J. Dannhauser's "Religion and the Conservatives" [December 1985], I am reminded of an incident in the 1930's in the 116th Street subway station near Columbia University and the Union Theological Seminary. Someone (no doubt, a brash Columbia student atheist) had written boldly across a billboard:

GOD IS DEAD!
—Nietzsche

The next day, someone (no doubt, a seminarian) inscribed the following riposte under the above:

NIETZSCHE IS DEAD!
—God

End of argument. The primacy of ontology over epistemology.

Mr. Dannhauser morosely concludes that until conservatives (why "conservatives"?) grapple with the larger question of the *truth* as distinguished from the *utility* of religion, religious belief "will remain without a proper intellectual foundation"—a task he wisely leaves to his readers.

The "larger question," then, is: does God, indeed, exist? Thomas

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Aquinas's magisterial rational "proof" of God's existence towers over Sartre's pitiful syllogisms "proving" that God does not exist. But belief in God's existence or nonexistence does not finally rest on man's finite powers of reasoning (*all* axioms are accepted as premises without proof) but on nonrational transcendental faith. . . . Long ago, Tertullian gave the definitive answer: "*Credo quia absurdum*," "I believe because it is absurd."

The believing Dostoevsky wrote (approximately), "If God does *not* exist, then all things [crimes and abominations] are possible." But the equally religious Antinomians, believing that God *does* exist and that by God's grace man is justified by faith alone, considered themselves free of the moral law to engage in crimes and abominations.

As for the rationalists, they accept causality as a universal principle. Since every effect must have an antecedent cause, tracing the chain of being backward must lead to the First Cause. The cosmogonists are now within a small fraction of a second of reconstructing the First Cause ("the Big Bang"), but, of course, will never quite get there, because as they approach infinity, they confront Zeno of Elia's paradox of the infinite series. The First Cause (to the believer, God) is thus forever beyond man's reach and understanding. This is religion's trump card. Indeed, some awestruck cosmogonists are themselves becoming transfixed by the "mystery" of the universe and creation and in at least one article and TV lecture have quoted from Genesis to express their sense of wonder.

Where, then, is the "proper intellectual foundation" of religious belief? A futile search.

If atheism is mere intellectual arrogance—scientism in the false guise of science—and belief in God can never be other than an article of faith, then, absent Pascal's gift or leap of faith, there remains only the credo of agnosticism. But, alas, it leaves the soul unsatisfied.

I remain, your reluctant agnostic—

ELIAS M. SCHWARZBART
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Werner J. Dannhauser has put his finger on a curious and profound idiosyncrasy in American religion that deserves more attention than it now receives. But I believe that he may have misdiagnosed the disorder and impeached the wrong culprit.

The idiosyncrasy is that institutional religion (at least in its mainline manifestations) is marching under false pretenses. Its predicament is something like the one that embarrassed the emperor who had no clothes. In the present case, however, the situation seems to be reversed: there are clothes, but no emperor; the garments are either empty or conceal an impostor.

The churches typically represent themselves as being the custodians and dispensers of the biblical faith. . . . But if one attends to the churches' public utterances and conference and convention agendas, and the sermons and general discourse of their representatives, one sees and hears something quite different. One typically hears mostly assertions about the importance of religion, church, and institutional ecumenism in themselves; prescriptions for public problems; moral and ethical admonitions; and advice about personal self-realization. The discrepancy . . . can be experienced first hand in the general evasiveness and embarrassment that typically accompany conversations among Christians in any frank attempt to discuss the nature, substance, and implications of the Christian faith.

At this point, of course, it becomes important to focus on the nature and substance of the biblical faith itself. What are the central, fundamental, and irreducible elements of that faith? . . .

Biblical faith is faith and trust in ultimate reality itself. Ultimate reality is understood as the ultimate source or process from which all being and nonbeing derive, and over which there is no human control—that which is sometimes called "fate," or "destiny," or "chance," or "the way things are," or "nature," or "history"—and which is called "God" by those who know the biblical faith. . . .

Biblical faith addresses the human predicament of lostness, alienation, incompleteness, and anxiety. In the context of biblical faith, life, even in its adversities, frustrations, and pain, is good.

The biblical understanding of human nature is one of ambivalence: man is both transcendent and mundane; both "image of God" and finite, weak, and dependent; both free and bound. Man aspires to that which is ultimate, but has a congenital disposition toward self-centeredness, illusion, and mistrust of ultimate reality and its benign intent. He persistently pursues reductionist strategies for coping with reality; hence the alienation and anxiety. The promise is that new life is available by trusting the divine intent. . . .

Why have the churches seemingly abandoned the biblical faith? Perhaps because they have absorbed—or been coopted by—another faith which has become pervasive in Western society. . . .

That other faith is, of course, the one given to us by the Enlightenment and its descendants. It goes by many names, but perhaps "liberalism" might do for present purposes. The theological and anthropological premises of that faith are, at least in part, radically different from those of the biblical faith: man has potential for basic change and perfection; reason and science are the only sources of knowing; revelation and faith are illusion; all opinions have equal value; the obstacles to a good society are ignorance and bad social institutions, not congenital human frailty; sin is not a reality; society, not individual responsibility, is the cause of crime and other evils; historical progress is possible; truth is relative, never absolute or transcendent.

From this it might appear that the reason conservatives cling to religion is not because religion is old. Perhaps, rather, they are conservatives because they have been touched by the biblical faith, and mistrust the theological and anthropological premises of liberalism. They have noticed, perhaps, that experience and history do not validate the liberal utopian view of human nature. Nor do they believe that religion will make men either good or happy. They know that man's goodness is permanently flawed and that life will never be perfect. . . .

Conservatives may not have focused sufficiently on the truth of the biblical faith, but then they seem to have been led astray by the churches whose business that is.

MICHAEL BORGE
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Werner J. Dannhauser raises the "disquieting" possibility that religion may be "useful *because* it is false. Plato's Socrates calls such sal-

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utary or nurturing myths noble lies; Nietzsche calls them holy lies."

Shortly after reading Mr. Dannhauser's enjoyable and thought-provoking article, I came across a headline in the November 26, 1985 issue of the *China Daily* (China's official English-language newspaper): "Print 'Healthy Books,' Publishers Are Told." The story under the headline tells us that Xu Liyi, chief of the Publication Bureau under the Propaganda Department of the Chinese Communist party, said that "publishing" in a socialist country should be different from that in capitalist societies. The fundamental task of Chinese socialist publishing is to educate the people. . . ." Comrade Xu, like Plato and Nietzsche, apparently believes in noble lies.

Mr. Dannhauser is quite correct to point out the unprecedented magnitude of the "crimes committed by the godless in our century." One should add, however, that Stalin and Hitler shared with the Inquisitor and Crusader a belief in the primacy of doctrine over truth.

GEORGE JOCHNOWITZ
College of Staten Island
Staten Island, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Werner J. Dannhauser's article raises the important philosophical question of the relation between truth and value.

The classical philosophers grounded human value in ontological truth, i.e., the very nature of the cosmos was conceived of as purposeful, and human values were conceived thereafter as part of this teleological process. Nature, then, was both intelligible and intelligent; normatively accessible and exemplary. With the elimination of teleology in physics by Galileo *et al.*, teleological values were left to purely human devices, so to speak. Nature was no longer conceived of as intelligent and thus man now transcended it. Eventually, history replaced nature as the norm for humans, but since history did not reveal immutable patterns ("laws") as did nature (which was conceived of as "Becoming" itself), values were easily and rapidly changeable. In this sense Nietzsche was right in scoffing at those who continued to talk about the old values when their ontological rug had already been pulled out from under them. This is where most intellectuals, who still resist nihilism, still stand, as Mr. Dannhauser aptly shows.

For this reason, some of those intellectuals concerned with preserving a stable realm of values ("moral order") are looking once again to religious traditions for a different kind of undergirding. For these traditions present their values in an intelligible way and are thus accessible, and they reveal their source as being an intelligent God. Nevertheless, because of their emphasis on transcendence, they do not claim to be wholly intelligible, nor do they present a God whose intelligence is totally imitable. This is why these traditions are apprehended by faith, and then, and only then, followed by reason.

As such, religious traditions cannot be appropriated by those who simply want to undergird society and culture but cannot or will not make the prior commitment of faith. Without this commitment, religious traditions can only function as "noble lies," viz., something useful for the unintelligent masses but unworthy of belief by the cognoscenti. Moreover, this type of *faith-less* appropriation of faith has been the stock in trade of all the ideologically rationalized totalitarianisms in this century—something which should frighten those who want to go this route. In other words, the relationship with God (*qua* truth) is primary and then has consequences for the relationship with humans (*qua* good). To make faith the mere tool of morality, however, as I suspect some of the neoconservatives want to do, itself is open to the scoffing of Nietzsche *et al.* once again. One cannot invoke religiously grounded values unless one has made the prior commitment of faith. The crisis in our culture, then, is a crisis of faith first and values and morals thereafter.

DAVID NOVAK
Baruch College
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Werner J. Dannhauser seems to argue that not only was it Nietzsche who declared that the cat of athe-

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ism was out of the bag, but that Nietzsche himself had a good deal to do with releasing it. But surely atheism has always been with us, at least practical atheism, which comes down to profound skepticism about transcendence in general and its Christian form in particular. This was true even in the "ages of faith," whenever they were.

To paraphrase: if and when conservatives grapple seriously with the question of the truth of religion, would that give religious belief a proper intellectual foundation? It would not. No one is interested. Theism used to be presumed to be true, just as today it is presumed to be false. What serious atheist today can justify his position? Or has even tried to do so?

On a recent trip I made to a respectable bookstore, the only atheist argument I came across was a new edition of Bertrand Russell's *Why I Am Not a Christian*. This non-book is a collection of papers and addresses already old when it was first put together almost thirty years ago.

The problem with atheism today is that it has become vulgar. Over a century ago, Ernest Renan protested against this development. Few people, he wrote, have the right to deny the truth of Christianity, because it takes enormous erudition and insight to dismantle the formidable case made by the theologians. Granted that there is more snobbery than truth in this statement, still the point is that rational and respectable atheist arguments are hard to come by. What glory is there in refuting Carl Sagan?

Joseph Epstein wrote recently that he had never in his life lost a political argument but added humbly that he had never won one, either. Alas, the same is true for religion.

THOMAS CLANCY
New Orleans, Louisiana

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Werner J. Dannhauser's "Religion and the Conservatives" raises important and difficult questions about religion's relationship to politics and philosophy. To deal with these questions, it is essential to distinguish between religion as a personal spiritual experience, on the one hand, and institutional religion, on the other.

For the individual, true religion is faith in the fatherhood of God and the consequent brotherhood of man, and trust in the effectiveness of the supreme human desire to do the will of God. The truth of this faith can never be proved or disproved by philosophy or science; it can be validated only in the personal experience of the individual believer. . . .

Institutional religion can best contribute to politics by enriching the ideals and wisdom of individual religionists. If these individuals are imbued with devotion to the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, they will be stimulated to take action in the social, political, and economic arenas, quite apart from their religious group. This activity may be "conservative" or "liberal." But to the extent that a religious group *per se* becomes involved in matters of political and economic reform, it ceases to act as a religious group and becomes just another political party.

DANIEL LOVE GLAZER
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As one who became a conservative because of the shortcomings, and even failures, of liberalism, and as a former political scientist, I write to say that I thoroughly enjoyed "Religion and the Conservatives." Conservatives are much like liberals in that they are locked into their own verities, though I suspect that in recent years, if only because the complexities of our economy and society do not appear to be responding to conservative theorems, they have been forced to rethink certain of their traditional ideas.

Still, there is much to be said for the practical wisdom of traditional values and the nuclear family, whose weakening has resulted in great costs to society, though most liberals will deny this. . . .

EDWARD M. LEVINE
Loyola University
Chicago, Illinois

WERNER J. DANNHAUSER writes:

For the most part, these generous letters require no comment by me. They testify to the importance of the topics I raised, and I gladly absolve them of any suspicion of agreeing or disagreeing with my article.

I do want to clarify a bit of what I tried to say in the article. I do not think the realms of faith and reason are totally separate from each other and I do not think they can be harmonized completely. Even when they come within hailing distance of each other, a difference persists between the man of faith, who believes what he can and doubts what he must, and the man of reason, who doubts what he can and believes what he must.

Since the realms of faith and reason contest each other, it is not for me to deny the differences between them or try to define them away. Thus I am not able to share Michael Borge's understanding of biblical faith as trust in ultimate reality. First of all, I don't know whether and how a sane man can distrust ultimate reality. Second of all, I am unable to recognize a notion of biblical faith that makes no reference to revelation, miracles, and God Himself.

I am especially grateful for Elias M. Schwarzbart's comments, though I see no way of revitalizing our faith by way of philosophical or even theological disputations. It seems to me that the ceaseless study of the Bible might bear richer fruit and that the first question on our agenda might well be: what happened at Sinai?

Espionage & the CIA

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "Who Killed the CIA?" [October 1985], Edward Jay Epstein explains that the "technical collection" of strategic data (like space photography) cannot replace espionage. Let me begin by reinforcing his critically important statement. Mr. Epstein says that America's technical collection is superb, and indeed, for the last twenty years the West has been bamboozled with miracles of, for instance, space photography over Russia, just as before the mid-1960's it was bamboozled with mysteries of British and American espionage in the Kremlin. But the problem first of all is that technical collection can only detect . . . weapons, and it cannot detect them in the research-and-development stage, as espionage can, but can only spot them years later when they are tested or deployed. Second, technical collection is part of military reconnaissance, normally conducted by the armed forces, not the job of a civilian espionage agency like the CIA. Third, because of conditions in the atmosphere, American KH-11 space photographs, for example, are and will continue to be worse than

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aerial photographs of World War II, and no better in fact than similar Soviet space photographs. At the same time, the art of camouflage has developed enormously in Russia since World War II, while in the West . . . it can hardly be used because the societies of the West are so open. In short, in the contest of technical collection, the West has been a frightful loser.

As for the contest of "waiting for defectors," it is obvious that Soviet defectors can come only from the foreign periphery of the country's strategic hierarchy, while American defectors come from its very heart. Mr. Epstein notes in his article that there have been at least five American defectors in the U.S. National Security Agency (NSA), which supplies the codes and ciphers used by the American government. Given more space, I could add much more to the picture. By contrast, no Soviet defector has even known where the Soviet NSA is. . . .

I have often encountered the Western assertion that technical collection accounts for 90 (or 92 or 96) percent of all intelligence collected. But if there were, for example, an oral decision by the Soviet rulers to launch an all-out strategic surprise attack on the United States—a decision which could only become known to the West via espionage—that information might account for a microscopic fraction of 1 percent of all intelligence data collected for that year, but be incomparably more important than the rest of the data put together. Without espionage, the West . . . is probably doomed as certainly as was the American Navy at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. . . .

But though he has done a great service in stressing the crucial importance of espionage, Mr. Epstein then goes astray.

Admiral Stansfield Turner did not kill the CIA's espionage when he became Director of Central Intelligence in 1977. Western espionage in totalitarian societies has never existed, unless we consider as espionage waiting for Soviet defectors (as in the case of Oleg Penkovsky) traveling back and forth to the West, who are invariably destroyed at the first attempt by a Western intelligence agency to "contact" them in Russia. . . .

Admiral Turner's book says practically nothing about espionage. Mr. Epstein is right when he says that Admiral Turner was appointed simply because he had been President Carter's classmate, though he actually had had nothing to do with espionage. But then neither did the Wall Street lawyer Allen Dulles or any subsequent Director of Central Intelligence. The fact that Dulles had waited in Bern during World War II for German defectors . . . no more made him a specialist on espionage in Russia than it made him a nuclear physicist of genius.

Before and after Turner or Allen Dulles, the CIA had no more to do with espionage than they did. The CIA's Golden Age lies ahead (if at all), not behind.

LEV NAVROZOV
Riverdale, New York

Animal Rights

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his review of *In Defense of Animals,* edited by Peter Singer [Books in Review, October 1985], Ronald Bailey takes for granted that it is self-evident that human beings, being moral creatures, have inherent rights, while animals, not regarded as moral creatures, cannot be said to have inherent rights. The fact is there is no such thing, historically, as "inherent rights," either for human beings or for animals. Rights are always granted, and have rarely been "self-evident."

That slaves were not considered human—at best the category of "subhuman" was created to describe their condition—was the assumption for most of the history of the human race. Plato and Aristotle thought so, and Aristotle granted the right of "superior" human beings to hunt "inferior" human beings. It was not at all self-evident to them that slaves belonged to the same species they did, were human as they were human. Many of the conquistadors experienced a similar lack of species identification with the Indians in the Western hemisphere; and throughout the European Middle Ages, serfs were legally denied human status. Their offspring were defined as "brood," a term associated with animal life, and they were not permitted to leave wills, because that was considered a human activity. A letter written in the late 14th century by the daughter of a feudal lord testifies eloquently to the fact that serfs were not regarded as belonging to the human race. The correspondent writes a friend of her intention to witness a serf giving birth to see "if they give birth as we do.". . . Until recently, the African Bushman was not regarded as human by many other Africans as well as by Europeans. Within living memory, he was hunted along with the hunting of other animals. It is a mistake to take species identification for granted, and one should not have to cite so recent a phenomenon as Nazi Germany to make this point.

On the other hand, there is plenty of evidence that what we call today the "rights of animals" is an old idea. Even the skeptic Voltaire believed that the Bible endorsed the "sacred alliance" between human and animal. Even in his century animals were regarded as "moral" creatures (an idea found both in Plato and the Bible) and were actually brought to trial when charged with misdemeanors. The Bible and Talmud give inexhaustible evidence of the concern for the "inherent rights" of animals, and lay careful boundaries as to what may or may not be done to them. The simple declaration, made many times, that God's covenant is with the animal world as well as with humankind, should suffice as evidence for a state of mind which Rabbi Kook described as "a virtue of such priceless value, which had at one time been in fact a possession of mankind."

It is only the modern world that has robbed animals of every right except, unfortunately, the right to suffer for human beings.

ROBERTA KALECHOFSKY
Editor and publisher, *Haggadah for the Liberated Lamb*
Founder, Jews for Animal Rights
Marblehead, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Ronald Bailey summarily dismisses the arguments in defense of animal rights as "empty." In fact, they have been recognized as meaningful by countless human cultures, including the American (most states have laws protecting animals from cruel treatment) and the Jewish (e.g., Maimonides: "There is no difference between human suffering and the pain felt by other living beings," *Guide for the Perplexed* 3:48).

As for Mr. Bailey's own arguments, they indeed appear empty. He contends, for example, that human beings alone are capable of being disappointed by a broken

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promise. He should visit my dog, who will mope or cry if denied a walk outside after it has been mentioned, or denied a treat after his performance of a deed usually meriting one.

Mr. Bailey argues, moreover, that animals are not capable of moral choice and action. If these terms are narrowly defined, he may have a point. But is he unaware of the altruistic behavior of animals, especially dogs, who have braved serious danger to themselves in order to come to the aid of human friends in need? Is that not a moral act, worthy of moral treatment in return?

I am aware that some serious people find this whole matter trivial, even amusing—an attitude rationalized in view of the overshadowing experience of human cruelty to humans. I believe, however, that cruelty to animals is part of a continuum of immoral human behavior, with quite serious implications for the rest of our culture. In the words of the poet Stanley Kunitz, "a gospel confined to the human parish is a prescription for annihilation."

IRA SILVERMAN
Princeton, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Ronald Bailey holds that the reason we may not legally kill human beings while at the same time condoning the slaughter of animals for meat is that human beings are capable of acting morally; we are disappointed by a broken promise. Animals, on the other hand, are not capable of making ethical choices.

He then uses this irrelevant claim as justification for breeding calves, penning them up so that they are immobile for weeks and thus unable to develop those muscles which are anathema to our regard for tender veal; for force-feeding geese until their stomachs are near explosion so that we can enjoy pâté de fois gras; for beating old horses in Central Park so that passengers can enjoy a romantic ride on New Year's eve. All this simply because these horses, cows, and geese are incapable of moral thought and action?

I would suggest that the human predilection for the slaughter of food animals makes us *immoral*, while the incapacity of others in the animal kingdom to have ethical codes is simply amoral.

Peter Singer's philosophy is simply this: put our taste for meat on one side of the scale of justice; put the desire of animals to live on the other side. See which need depresses the scale. Killing animals merely to appease our taste buds then becomes absurd. Slaughtering, cramming beings into tight enclosures on factory farms, even merely gawking at them in the zoo are truly examples of speciesism and as evil as any other "ism" that considers one group superior to others. . . .

HARVEY S. KARTEN
Brooklyn, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Animal-rights philosophers, as Ronald Bailey notes, argue that sentience rather than rationality should be the criterion for the ascription of rights. These philosophers, Mr. Bailey writes, point to the fact that even though mentally retarded people "do not meet our usual standards of rationality for moral consideration, we do not sanction killing or performing laboratory experiments on them." Mr. Bailey's counter is that the reasons we treat "mentally retarded adults with moral consideration are complex, but they include our deference to the feelings of their family members. . . ."

Thus Mr. Bailey acknowledges that the reason is not solely deference to the feelings of family members. What else could it be, then, but that they have inherent rights regardless of their value to others? Surely a mentally retarded person without family or friends has a right not to be vivisected or slaughtered for food. Mr. Bailey has not shown why animals who are as rational as mentally retarded people and who have an equal ability to feel pain are not entitled to the same consideration.

HENRY COHEN
Columbia, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . In discussing Tom Regan's essay in *In Defense of Animals*, Ronald Bailey says that "the adoption of Regan's position would abolish any moral distinction between animals and human beings," and implies that Regan thinks we should not take mental abilities into account when making distinctions between animals and people. On the contrary, as Regan makes clear in his book, *The Case for Animal Rights*, if we had to choose between saving the lives of a million or more dogs and a single human, we should choose the human in every case. As Regan notes, however, "what the rights view implies should be done in *exceptional* cases cannot be fairly generalized to unexceptional cases." It would be more accurate to say that Regan believes that there is no morally relevant difference between an animal and a severely retarded human of comparable intelligence. Severely retarded people cannot make moral choices; does Mr. Bailey think that we should be allowed to experiment on them? I hope not.

As for his observation that we treat mentally retarded humans with moral consideration out of deference to the feelings of their family members, Regan notes that, among other things, this objection makes the duty to protect these moral patients wholly contingent upon other beings having a "sentimental interest" in them. Suppose that Mr. Smith, instead of loving his retarded son, despises and wants to be rid of him. Does that mean that we should be allowed to experiment on Smith's son? Of course not! . . .

ALAN HOUSTON
Nacogdoches, Texas

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I suspect that I am not alone in my gratitude to Ronald Bailey for his clear and compelling explanation of just why the incapacity of infants and a few adults does not sanction extending the protection humans have to animals. With remarkable clarity he exposes pernicious nonsense for what it is.

But I wonder if perhaps Mr. Bailey errs in agreeing with Peter Singer and Tom Regan that, in Mr. Bailey's words, "the ability to feel physical pain is a necessary . . . condition for granting moral consideration to a being." What about cases where humans lack the ability to feel physical pain? Surely, regardless of their incapacity, they deserve moral consideration.

JAMES C. DICK
Huntington Woods, Michigan

RONALD BAILEY writes:

Roberta Kalechofsky makes the point that human beings are not only capable of acting immorally toward one another, but that they have often enthusiastically done so. However, she goes astray when she implies that my arguments for

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according moral rights to human beings and not to animals are based on "species identification." That argument is one that I certainly did not make. Moral rights are to be accorded to beings who are rational—no matter what species they happen to belong to. She ends by relying upon divine revelation as the source of the rights of animals. If divine revelation is the basis of one's belief in animal rights, nothing I might say to the contrary could be persuasive to the holder of such beliefs. However, I might mention in passing that divine revelation works both ways—what does Roberta Kalechofsky say to those who believe that animals, unlike human beings, have no souls, and therefore no moral rights?

Ira Silverman points to the laws against cruelty to animals as current examples of animal rights in our society. However, such laws have been enacted largely for the purpose of soothing the sensibilities of human beings like Mr. Silverman, and only incidentally for the "protection" of animals. Maimonides is, of course, correct in noting that human beings and animals both feel pain, but, as I have argued, the relevant difference in terms of rights is rationality, not sentience alone. Regarding Mr. Silverman's dog and the "altruistic" actions of some animals, it is sufficient to point out that animals can be trained to perform both *apparently* altruistic and vicious actions. Does Mr. Silverman propose to blame a police guard dog, should it kill a child, in the same way that he would a human murderer?

Harvey S. Karten's letter is reminiscent of many of the essays in *In Defense of Animals*. Mr. Karten merely asserts that slaughtering animals for food is wrong and proceeds to describe activities which he and other animal-rights activists find distasteful. His morality is based on aesthetic considerations. Not only do humans have a "predilection for the slaughter of food animals," but so do many other species including lions, eagles, bears, tigers, sharks, killer whales, etc. Are they also "immoral" because they consume flesh as food? Are herbivores ethically superior to carnivores?

Henry Cohen and Alan Houston share the belief, held by many animal-rights activists, that our treatment of severely mentally-retarded human beings undercuts any assertion that rationality is the sole criterion upon which we should grant moral consideration to a being. They rightly point out that we do not sanction the use of the severely mentally retarded in vivisection experiments. In my review, I argued that we treat mentally retarded persons with some moral consideration in part because of "our deference to the feelings of their family members," and those feelings are based on more than mere sentimentality. It is difficult to judge to what degree the severely retarded may share in what is uniquely human, but we should give the benefit of the doubt to viable beings who have the human form and who share so much of the human genotype. Lest Mr. Cohen and Mr. Houston think that all mentally retarded human beings are, in spite of their diminished rational faculties, treated with an inordinate amount of moral respect, I will mention that our legal system is already in the process of deciding when it is permissible to allow severely mentally retarded newborns to die. Of course, permitting a newborn who has no brain damage to die is murder.

Finally, James C. Dick makes a very insightful point; upon further reflection, I believe that I too hastily accepted the argument that the ability to feel physical pain is a necessary though not sufficient condition for granting moral consideration to a being.

Blacks and Jews

To the Editor of Commentary:

Despite Glenn C. Loury's statement in his article, "Behind the Black-Jewish Split" [January], neither the Reverend Joseph Lowery, Dr. Benjamin Hooks, nor myself has ever singly or as a group met with or made any presentation to Muammar Qaddafi.

I knew many of us looked alike to white opponents of affirmative action, but had not realized this affliction extended to black critics like Mr. Loury as well.

If the rest of his article is as ill-informed, it is small wonder blacks and Jews sometimes find themselves at cross purposes.

Each of us deserves an apology and a retraction.

Julian Bond
Senator, 39th District
The State Senate
Atlanta, Georgia

Glenn C. Loury writes:

In my article I argued that one reason for the increasing tensions between blacks and Jews is the divergence of views among their respective elites about the Arab-Israeli conflict. I cited as evidence the response of black leaders to the forced resignation of Andrew Young in 1979 from his post as UN ambassador. Among these responses, I claimed, was the awarding of a medal of appreciation to Muammar Qaddafi by a black delegation visiting Libya, led by Joseph Lowery and including Benjamin Hooks and Julian Bond.

Regrettably, this claim was in error. Joseph Lowery did lead a delegation of blacks to the Middle East at this time, and a medal of appreciation was indeed awarded by blacks to Qaddafi. But the Lowery delegation did not present that award, and it did not contain Dr. Hooks or Mr. Bond as members. I sincerely apologize to Dr. Hooks, Reverend Lowery, and Mr. Bond. I based my claim on an account of the Andrew Young firing given in the recently published book, *Jesse Jackson and the Politics of Race* by Thomas Landess and Richard Quinn (Jameson Books). However, I must accept full responsibility for the error.

Finally, let me state that this was an honest error, not a lie or a fabrication. Moreover, this inaccuracy does not affect my argument in that article. Nor does it erase the fact that, in response to Mr. Young's firing, major black civil-rights leaders, including Jesse Jackson and Joseph Lowery, went to the Middle East and embraced Israel's mortal enemies. In doing so they lent the aura and moral authority of the civil-rights movement to Yasir Arafat's PLO.

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In Occupied Poland

Martin Krygier

My family comes from Warsaw. My parents were born and lived there until the outbreak of World War II. They are Polish Jews, for whom the adjective is no less important than the noun. They never denied their Jewishness, in the face of considerable and sometimes violent Polish anti-Semitism. Unlike most Jews, however, but like many other middle-class urban Jewish intellectuals, they felt profoundly Polish—in language, culture, and nationality. They have not forgotten what it meant to be a Jew in prewar Poland, but they were and remain Polish patriots. Their Jewishness may well have influenced their politics—my mother was a member of the prewar Communist party and my father was a left-wing socialist—but it did not diminish their attachment to Poland, its poets, its past, or, for that matter, its people. Against Polish anti-Semites and in contrast to prewar Zionists, they denied that Jews were—to use a delicacy recently uttered by an Australian Pole—"guests" in Poland. It was their home and they were deeply attached to it.

After considerable time, and through a rather robust Antipodean sieve, these attitudes and values seeped into my soul more than I knew and more, I suspect, than anyone intended. (I was scarcely conscious of this until I was in my late twenties.) As I suppose often happens among the children of refugees, for whom cultural and traditional attachments cannot be simple givens, the land of my parents, its culture, language, and people, came increasingly to occupy my thoughts and sense of self. Particularly over the past ten years, I came to read Polish and about Poland, to seek and enjoy conversations and friendships—some of my closest—with young Polish refugees, and to think of myself, in somewhat confused but important part, as Polish.

So Poland and "Polishness" have dwelt rather vividly in my imagination for some years, as they have in my parents' since 1940. But my parents have never been back, and until September 1985 I had never been there at all. Since the war my father, Richard Krygier, the publisher of *Quadrant* magazine in Australia, has been a prominent and effective anti-Communist activist, publisher, and writer in Australia, primarily in the wider Australian community but also within the Polish community there. He is well known to the Polish authorities. He has not believed that it would be safe for him or his family to travel to Poland and until this year the proposition was never put to the test.

I visited Poland in late September and early October, for the two weeks preceding the recent "elections." (Polish, by the way, has two words for elections: one, *głosowanie*, literally means "voting"; the other, *wybory*, means "choices." One philosopher explained to me that while in its omnipresent pre-"election" propaganda the regime used the second word, Cardinal Glemp, the Polish primate, in an unusually forthright speech, spoke only of *głosowanie*. There was, of course, no choice.) My original purpose was simply to visit and absorb impressions of the land of my forebears and my imagination. I was also keen to discuss some academic work with several distinguished writers in my field. As it turned out, I met Poles at European conferences held shortly before my trip to Poland and was asked to give some seminars in a number of universities. This somewhat changed the balance of my visit. Since, however, there is only one subject of conversation in Poland—Poland—and since everyone participates in that conversation—taxi drivers, passengers in elevators and trains, people in queues—my second purpose deviated from my first less than it might in countries with less urgent and pervasive obsessions.

I had apprehensions of a directly political sort about visiting Poland. I carried what the regime must regard as a suspect surname and my own comparatively few and insignificant political activities would tend to confirm any genealogical prejudice they might bear. And I was aware that Communist regimes are not beyond bearing such prejudices. My family was quite anxious and sought to dissuade me from going (though as the visit approached I suspect that their fear was tempered by excitement that I would actually be staying in a Warsaw which they had not seen for

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forty-five years). When it was clear that I would be going, my mother warned me sternly that in Poland "you must mince your words." I had no heroic aspirations and I was not concerned that anything dramatic would happen. I had been assured by knowledgeable people that once I was granted a visa I would be quite safe. Yet when I came to make decisions about, say, what to take across the border or what to say or to whom within Poland, I realized that notwithstanding my not inconsiderable book-learning about Communism I really had no idea of how to behave in an unfree country, particularly one in which I was intensely interested. Even my mother's sage warning did not take me very far. This cut both ways: I might, rashly, not mince words enough; or, equally unsettling, I might mince too many words and manage to demean myself and learn little but platitudes at the same time. Similarly, though I knew well that certain things should be said and done only among those one trusted, I was not at all sure that I would be able to tell the difference.

As it turned out, I need not have worried. I had no political difficulties at any time, at the border or anywhere else. Indeed, I later regretted that I had not taken in a bagful of Western literature, for which Poles are starved for both political and financial reasons. (Instead, advised that Poles lacked fresh fruit, I took a bagful of apples. This was not an inspired choice. Poland was swimming in apples when I arrived. Oranges, on the other hand, are extremely scarce and astoundingly expensive—a kilo cost 1,800 zlotys, about one-tenth the average monthly wage. Lemons are unobtainable.)

As for mincing words, well, virtually no one does. This is one of the exhilarating things about visiting Poland. One continually meets people preoccupied with serious matters, in fact the same desperately serious matters, and prepared to speak openly, candidly, and thoughtfully about them to a stranger. And since in Poland—unlike in "normal" countries, as Poles call the West—conversations are in a sense always the same, one gains quicker and easier access into what preoccupies people than is usual in countries with the luxury of unfocused small talk. There is no small talk, though there are plenty of jokes, all of them political.

The openness with which people are prepared to speak in Poland is extraordinary, whether compared with other Eastern-bloc countries or, as I understand it, with pre-Solidarity Poland. This is one of the profound and lingering consequences of August 1980. The English journalist Timothy Garton Ash goes to the heart of what several people told me when he writes of the "principle of As If" which has long been part of the self-definition of the Polish intelligentsia and its understanding of its mission:

> Try to live *as if* you live in a free country, it says, though today your study is a prison cell. . . . But . . . in the mid 1970's, the number of intellectuals who actually tried to live by the principle of As If was still tiny. . . . What transformed the "dissident" minority into a "dissident" majority was the Solidarity revolution of 1980 and 1981. The Solidarity revolution was a revolution of consciousness. What it changed, lastingly, was not institutions or property relations or material circumstances, but people's minds and attitudes. . . . Behind the front line of confrontation between Solidarity's national leadership and the Communist authorities, millions of people across the country—in factories, offices, universities, schools—suddenly found that they no longer needed to live the double life, that they could say in public what they thought in private. . . . For a few months it really was *as if* they lived in a free country.*

In Poland it does not take much looking to find people at least talking "as if." People generally are not afraid of the consequences of what they say and they say a great deal. Poland is not Russia. This is evident in the ease and speed with which strangers and chance acquaintances will move to tell you what your friends have already told you: life is terribly hard, the economic system is quite surreal in its inefficiency, and nothing better (or, in a common variant, much worse) can realistically be expected. Not a single person I spoke to dissented from these judgments, not even a journalist for the party daily, *Trybuna Ludu*, who criticized Solidarity and defended the present government but whose private comments about "the system" differed remarkably little from those of everyone else.

Everyone made such judgments freely, if not always publicly. I spent an hour in a little shop run by a father and son, waiting while a cap I had bought was stretched to fit my oversized head. In no time I received instruction on the privations and *bałagan* (mess, chaotic disorder) of everyday life, the absurdity of official pronouncements, the impossibility of believing anything—particularly optimistic things—that "they" (*oni*), the "Reds" (*czerwoni*), the "Communists," say. The father had enthusiastically believed "them" when they came to power after the war. He laughed, recalling the promised transformations to which he had looked forward.

In a taxi traveling from Cracow to Auschwitz I received similar, though more detailed, instruction, and example upon example of ways in which the system makes even the most ordinary, routine activities difficult. After about half an hour of such pedagogy, the taxi driver paused, perhaps thinking of earlier times in his life, and said, "Sir, I've said quite a lot. I trust none of this will go beyond the two of us." Before I had come to Poland I would have expected such a question. After listening for two weeks to talk "as if," I was

* "Poland: The Uses of Adversity," *New York Review of Books*, June 27, 1985.

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startled. I assured him that I would betray no confidences, and the lesson continued.

BEFORE visiting Poland, and with no thought of the visit, I had written several papers, including one on my current work in legal theory and one revisiting work I had done some years ago on Marxism and bureaucracy. When invited to give seminars, I offered the former but once, largely in jest, mentioned the latter. That was taken up with enthusiasm and I felt in a quandary. Having told myself that I would be sensible, I was not sure that a critical discussion of Marx, Engels, Trotsky on Stalinism, and postwar critics of Communism such as Milovan Djilas, the Poles Jacek Kurón and Karol Modzelewski, the Hungarians George Konrád and Ivan Szelenyi, the Russian Michael Voslensky, and others, was the best way to begin. Yet the paper had been conceived and written as ordinary academic work and I did not want to *start* by being a coward before I knew that it was even necessary. I had received wildly different advice, some people saying that I should not even take the paper across the border, others (rightly, as it turned out) saying I would not encounter any problems. With some misgivings, which only disappeared when the customs officials evinced no interest in what I read or wrote, I had taken the paper in with me. (Poles, needless to say, have greater difficulties, at the border and everywhere else.)

I decided to leave the choice of what to give until I had some feel for the situation. Ultimately I left the decision to my hosts wherever I visited, and gave each paper twice. On one occasion the head of the department I was visiting preferred to hear my other talk, whether because it seemed more interesting or because it seemed safer, I don't know. But some young members of the department had invited several postgraduate students and there were a number of ex-Solidarity activists in the audience (also, I later learned, three party members). They suggested the seminar take a vote, and it was Marxism again. On both occasions, discussion of a paper highly critical of Marxist treatments of the social and political role of bureaucrats was absolutely free and unconstrained. On both occasions the discussion was fascinating to me, as much anthropologically as intellectually.

Marxism has a somewhat different resonance where it is the ideology of a loathed regime from what it still means in universities in the West. In Poland I met few Marxists—indeed, to my knowledge, none—though I did meet several people who had thought deeply about Marxism. On the two academic occasions, few sought to dispute my argument that the Marxist tradition had little useful and much that was useless to say on the subject of bureaucracy. On the contrary, several speakers warmed to the theme. Essentially the discussion, strikingly and poignantly un-"academic" in the pejorative sense, was about whether I or the thinkers I discussed had anything illuminating to say about Poland (and the other countries with "really existing socialism"). On both occasions people freely expressed views, which they could nowhere publish "aboveground," concerning the nature of their political and social system and its practices.

One speaker, for example, vehemently denied that one could sensibly use the same term for Western bureaucrats and those in the Communist bloc. The gist of his remarks was that there is a difference between a clerk and a jailer, which it is important not to blur. The seminars themselves were ordinary university discussions, in no sense secret or clandestine, and I felt no pressure to mince words. On the contrary. Yet my paper could not appear aboveground in Poland. If it should appear underground I would be delighted and in more distinguished company than I am likely to be asked to join elsewhere.

Underground is not very subterranean. People constantly exchange illegal periodicals—of which there are allegedly over a thousand—and whole Western and banned Polish libraries can be had in underground Polish editions. Such publications are often used as texts in universities. Timothy Garton Ash conveys "the extraordinary quality of Polish intellectual life today":

> Here is a Communist state in which the best writers are published by underground publishers, the best journalists write for underground papers, the best teachers work out of school; in which banned theater companies just carry on performing, in monasteries, while sacked professors carry on lecturing as "private guests" at their own seminars: in which churches are also schools, concert halls, and art galleries. An entire world of learning and culture exists quite independent of the state that claims to control it. . . .

A recent article in the (London) *Times*, reporting on the impact of high-tech in the Eastern bloc, gives further examples:

> There is a hunger for uncensored films in the bloc. By Western standards some of this is pretty innocuous. . . . [C]hurch videos—now a very common phenomenon—can draw a full house in Poland. But the challenge to the censor is usually more explicit. A film of the funeral of [Father Jerzy] Popiełuszko [the priest beaten to death by members of the state security forces], recorded by Solidarity cameramen who flaunted equipment bearing the sticker "independent Poland productions," is shown regularly in churches.
>
> The underground produce documentaries—interviews with people who claim to have been abducted or beaten in the Torun area, the more politically sensitive of the Pope's sermons—and have started work on a feature film about internment under martial law. They also make scores of copies of banned films. . . .
>
> Some Polish dissidents use word processors to print out *samizdat* materials. Underground

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pamphlets, even books, are sometimes put onto floppy discs, smuggled into Poland, then printed at the press of a button. More playfully, there is even an underground video game called Zomo in which a riot policeman chases a Solidarity supporter through a maze of streets. [November 12, 1985]

THE most solidly institutionalized pillar of life "as if" in this extraordinarily religious, now almost solely Catholic, society is the Church. One particularly poignant example is the church of St. Stanisław Kostka in Żoliborz, a suburb of Warsaw. This is the church where Father Jerzy Popiełuszko preached. After his murdered body was found, he was buried in the grounds of the church. He is mourned as a martyr both of the Church and of Solidarity. His church and its grounds have become a shrine in his memory (there is also a memorial to the young student, Gzegorz Przemyk, also murdered by the police, in 1983), and pilgrims come from all over Poland leaving badges and banners—huge Solidarity banners—in his honor.

It is a startling and moving experience to enter these grounds from the unrelieved grayness of Warsaw. In "official" Warsaw there is almost no color and, it must be said, no visible sign of Solidarity. During my stay, in fact, the only public color was provided by the ubiquitous and frequently glossy "election" advertisements: "From a Wise Choice Come Wise Laws"; "We are Choosing the Polish Sejm [Parliament]—Secure, Financially Responsible, Just"; "Do You Thirst for Democracy? Help Develop It"; "Choose! Decide for Yourselves Who Will be Your Representatives"; "Patriotism: A Characteristic All Poles Share"; "The Future of the Country Depends on You." (Note that all energies are in fact devoted to persuading people simply to vote, not to choose.)

In Popieluszko's church the contrast is complete: his grave thickly covered with constantly tended fresh flowers, the fences of the churchyard strewn with one vivid banner after another proclaiming slogans both religious and political, and naming their source: University of Łódz Solidarity, Warsaw Steelworks, etc. In answer to the election posters, compulsorily placed in every shopfront, several of these banners proclaimed: "Father Jerzy, We are Voting Only for Mary." (One of them continued, Solidarity, Lublin Electoral District.)

So conversations are free, lively, intense, and deeply serious, though the jokes are good. (Blackest joke I heard: In Łódz, the Polish-Soviet Friendship Society houses a coffee shop. The locals call it Katyn, after the forest in which the corpses of several thousand Polish officers, murdered by Soviet troops in 1940, were found buried.) In the contrast now universally used by Poles, "society" (*społeczeństwo*) has not been cowed by the "power" (*władza*) and survives as a largely autonomous realm. There are dense and strong social networks beyond the reach of the state, a vast range of extra-state activities, publications and forums for debate and discussion, and, in the Church, a powerful institutional protector of independent activity, almost wholly intact.

And one is moved and humbled, not simply because all this is happening under the nose of a state which, to put it gently, would prefer that it did not, but also because so much of it is done on such an admirable moral and intellectual plane. I met many people for whose views and life-choices I felt deep respect. Unlike what so often passes for political engagement among Western intellectuals, in Polish discussions one finds no coquettish frivolousness about serious, usually tragic, political business, such as revolution—even among supporters of revolution. This is not, of course, to say that everyone is wise and reasonable, but many are and as many or more are brave. It is hard not to be a little intoxicated by it all.

YET from the beginning I was struck by how sad so much of what I saw seemed. I was ill-prepared for this. Though I had heard about most of what I will describe, I had not felt it. The sadness of the conditions of life in contemporary Poland is so pervasive as to be palpable when one is there. Yet it is, of course, intangible and difficult to convey to outsiders. It may indeed not be reducible to its most obvious manifestations, but here are some that I observed.

Before my visit, I, like many people, tended to think of Poland in rather vivid colors, especially after August 1980. The Gdańsk strike that saw the birth of Solidarity was, after all, a vivid event, worthy of the startling flags, banners, slogans, badges, and T-shirts with which the movement it sparked is indelibly associated. The emancipated society of which I have spoken deserves to be evoked in vibrant, lively tones, and in journalistic accounts it usually is. The present Pope, who is one of the major inspirations of life "as if," and Lech Wałęsa, its best-recognized practitioner, are hardly "gray blurs," as Trotsky used to call Stalin. And they are nothing if not Polish. On the other hand, it is traditional to think of *apparatchiks* as gray, and men like Kania and Jaruzelski do not let us down. Where the apparatus has crushed or dominated the society, I guess one expects grayness to permeate everything. But I did not expect that of Poland.

I was not really prepared for the overwhelming grayness of the setting of everyday life, or at least that part of it constructed in the past forty years. The image that kept recurring to me was of a curtain, not iron any more, for it is too full of holes, but thick, drab, shabbily patched, unrelievedly gray, and draped over nearly everything one saw, everything that didn't move. Warsaw, of course, had to be almost wholly reconstructed after the war and, with the splendid exceptions of the faithfully rebuilt Old and New Towns, it is done in a uniformly drab, swiftly dilapidated,

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and "user-unfriendly" way. Indeed, Warsaw is so drab now that I was shocked to walk by a flower store (as it happened, a lovely one) and see such an abundance of brightness.

Other cities were less damaged, it is true, and there much beauty remains. The center of Cracow, untouched by the ravages of the war, is splendid, although it degenerates swiftly, and in the same monotone fashion as Warsaw, as you move into the suburbs. Then, too, my experience was limited, and I did see several exceptions. In Warsaw, for example, to walk into a prewar apartment after unleavened exposure to the typical small, dingy, postwar chicken coops is like moving from night into day. And since Poland has so many enterprising people bending and finding gaps in rules, there are sure to be many more exceptions.

Yet I do not believe that this impression of grayness was an illusion, and it does not simply have to do with specific material things. It pervades all public space: the identical half-empty shops with identical and identically drab signs; the weary shoppers standing in the omnipresent queues; the dilapidated but not old buildings; the uneven, pot-holed roads; the shoddiness of cars and other finished goods; the drabness of clothes. Even if not all that one hears about the shoddiness of domestic products is justified, it is believed to be true, and it is universally blamed on the system. That in itself is a significant social fact. Perhaps if one tore away the curtain nothing much would change, but the contrast between the vividness and resourcefulness of the society and the sickly pallor of the conditions of life makes that hard to believe. And this contrast, like so many of the contrasts in Poland, is all the more poignant for being so stark.

LIFE is not merely gray but constantly, pervasively, and wearyingly *hard*. Even the most routine goods are difficult, and unpredictably difficult, to get. So a shopper's life—and who is not a shopper when so much is scarce? —is a constant hunt for something that, if here today, is sure to be gone tomorrow. So far as I could tell—my sample being merely three large urban centers, not the provinces—it is not at the moment a question of poverty. Essentials can be obtained somehow—in stores if they and you coincide; *na lewo* (literally, "on the left," roughly, "under the table," "on the sly"); on the black market (for more); from private sellers, some of whom are legal; or, if one has Polish gold—U.S. dollars—at the special dollar shops where many imported goods and some higher-class Polish goods are available to those (both Poles and foreigners) who have hard currency. But if poverty was not evident to me, the constant strain of making ends meet was. Money is very short and all too often even if one has the money one cannot find what one wants to spend it on. So much attention has to be paid for such pitiful rewards.

I took three friends to dinner at a restaurant. The dinner cost about 7,000 zlotys, or well over one-third of the average monthly salary and the whole of a pensioner's monthly pension. (For a Westerner this is either a reasonable sum, at the official rate of 150 zlotys to the U.S. dollar, compulsorily extorted from the tourist at $15 per day spent in Poland, or next to nothing, at the real rate of 650 zlotys to the dollar.) One of my guests, a surgeon, is not well paid by Polish standards, and *a fortiori* by most other standards. He cannot make money on the side, as many doctors apparently do, because his specialty requires hospital facilities. In any event, he is happy to work in the hospital because he still wants to learn from more experienced specialists. But he is angry and frustrated that facilities, equipment, conditions, drugs, are so primitive in Poland.

His wife, a vivacious and attractive woman, regaled us for some time on how fortunate she was to live in Poland. She explained that it is insufferably boring to go shopping in a "normal" country: as soon as you leave home you know where to go for what you want and you know that it will be there. Her life, by contrast, is full of surprises. Each day means a fresh hunting expedition. She goes forth armed, like almost every Polish pedestrian, with a string bag—whatever your purpose, you may pass a shop which has something you want, or a queue which suggests that it might be worth waiting for whatever it is that others are waiting for. And then she stalks. She is never certain what her "game" will be, or whether it will still be there by the time she gets to it, but she is ready to pounce. One day it might be toilet paper—a good catch—another day something else. And when she pounces she buys up all that she can or, if it is rationed, all she is allowed, because it might not reappear for some time. (One habit which Poles who travel told me is hard to unlearn in the West is the habit of buying in bulk, in case the merchandise fails to reappear.) If there is a crush of people for a popular item she limbers her hand so that her attack is faster than another's. Each day she has the opportunity of returning home triumphant, because she has found something she thought unobtainable, or beaten the competition to something desirable. Her life is full of successes. This parable was told lightly and wittily, and I laughed a lot. But of course it was not a funny story.

It is in fact hard not to laugh at the surreal consequences of an economic system so bizarrely out of touch with human needs. Thus, the same woman told me of a new institution for people on particularly long queues, which might last many days or even longer. Queues for furniture are apparently among these. The institution is that of stand-in queuers—usually pensioners or cripples—who for a fee hold a place for their "clients" until the time of purchase arrives. I also heard of an academic searching for pots and pans who was rung up by a friend to tell her of a set of

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Chinese cookware she had seen on display as she rode past in a tram. Unfortunately, it turned out to be a display organized (if I remember rightly) by the Polish-Chinese Friendship Society, not an item for sale. For all I know, she is still looking.

The day I arrived in Poland from London—hot, tired, and sticky in a crowded train—friends drove me to the apartment where I would be staying for a week. Unfortunately, the apartment—in a huge block in the center of Warsaw—was without hot water. When I asked why, my friend shrugged and replied, "Who knows? Socialism." I was happy to take a cold shower but my friend would not hear of it. Instead he drove me to an international hotel with a sauna and swimming pool. He knew a caretaker and exchanged favors with him. Thus I spent my first hour in Poland, unexpectedly luxuriating in a sauna for well-heeled foreigners.

The system's inefficiencies and incompetency are such that it breeds a people skilled in informal arrangements—legal, semi-legal, and illegal—to overcome its privations and frustrations. Such arrangements are endemic: what is unavailable can often be found, from a friend, for a bribe, *na lewo*; what is illegal is often done, and for many ordinary, mundane purposes needs to be done.

One example evident to every tourist is currency exchange. Private currency exchange is a criminal offense. But the dollar is so valuable—both because it is worth many zlotys and because *officially* many things can only be bought for dollars, no matter how many zlotys you have—that as a natural and inevitable consequence people are keen to buy dollars. And the official rate is so derisory that anyone with dollars who needs zlotys has little incentive to go to a bank. Even if he does, he will be accosted in the street outside by touts offering a handsome rate for his money. He might even receive an offer from the bank teller. So currency constantly changes hands privately; everyone does it, and everyone knows that everyone does. But don't buy from those touts. Among them are provocateurs and you might be arrested.

Apartments are very small. One distinguished academic I met has a grown daughter who is ill and who with her own husband and child lives with her parents in their apartment. There is so little room that the academic lives in his office, going home at about eleven in the evening merely to sleep. Currently a young couple who put their names down for a palace such as this can expect to wait about twenty years. In the meantime, unless they inherit an existing apartment or can afford what I am told are prohibitive prices to buy one, they must cram in with their parents and hope that their own children might get the benefit by the time *they* are ready to leave home.

A friend bemoaned the lack of mobility among Polish academics: she occasionally dreamed of moving from Cracow to Warsaw or some other city but said it was inconceivable. I asked if that was because jobs were tight, as they are now in Western universities. "No," she replied, "I would have nowhere to live." When I emerged from my sauna in Warsaw, I went to the telephone operator of the exclusive, expensive, international hotel housing it in order to look up a number. The operator gave me a 1978 phone book, which, she said, was the most recent she had. "But don't worry; we don't move around."

LIFE is a constant grind. There is nothing dramatic about this, nothing horrifying, just an unending, frustrating, time-consuming, and unspeakably wearying grind. Moreover, for many people I spoke to the strain is not merely, or primarily, related to material privations and frustrations. Of course everyone is sick of queues, but the tiredness is not merely physical—though there is more than enough of that. Even the bravest people I met, perhaps especially they, live under constant psychic strain. Life "as if," after all, is not without risk or price. True, it appears that the regime has for the moment given up on hearts and minds. It seems resigned to being regarded as the alien "power" set against and oppressing Polish "society." And as a glance eastward shows, the regime could be more brutal than it has yet been. But it insists on compliance and appears to seek submission, in an increasingly repressive manner.

The local operations of Solidarity have, for the moment at least, been crushed. The shrines to Przemyk and Popiełuszko, extraordinary symbols of independence though they are, do, after all, commemorate murders. Arrests continue. In May 1985 three prominent dissidents were arrested for discussing a proposed 15-minute strike (which never took place) with Lech Wałęsa in his apartment. In June, after a farcical trial, the three—Adam Michnik, Bogdan Lis, and Władysław Frasyniuk—received 2½-to-3½-year jail terms. The recent so-called amnesty for political prisoners will not apply to them or to anyone regarded as "socially dangerous." New laws which came into force on July 1 (the day protests were expected over increases in meat prices and falling living standards) augment the legal powers of the security forces and summary courts, further restrict rights of independent assembly, and increase penalties for "public-order disturbances."

Hitherto the universities seemed, for some reason, to have missed some of the more malevolent forms of regime attention. Indeed, the universities were governed by a relatively liberal Higher Education Act of 1982, which was an only partly watered-down version of drafts prepared before the state of war was declared. This is changing. In April 1985, Bronisław Geremek, a medieval historian and adviser to Solidarity, became the first person to be fired from the Polish Academy of Sciences. In May, General Jaruzelski told the Central Committee that (according to a report in the British *Listener*) "the state could no longer afford to

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maintain universities that would be training grounds for dissent." In late July, the Polish Sejm, which had passed the Higher Education Act of 1982, issued "amendments" emasculating the autonomy and self-government which that Act had allowed.

The draft amendments had brought forth massive protests from university governing bodies, academics, and students—protests in themselves unique in Communist states. The final laws are thus somewhat less vicious than they were intended to be, but they are vicious enough. New faculty members must take an oath of allegiance to the state and pledge that they will dedicate themselves to the socialist education of students. The universities' electoral colleges, which used to elect rectors and deans, are to be disbanded, and this function is to be performed by university senates—with all choices for membership subject to veto by the Minister of Education. The Minister can also overrule or suspend decisions of collegiate bodies, dissolve them, decide on curricula, and dismiss rectors, deans, and other members of the faculty. The powers of student self-government bodies have been gutted.

When I was in Warsaw it was rumored that eight faculty members were scheduled to be fired. Elsewhere the head of one institute I visited was told to expect an investigation of his staff to examine their records of loyal acts. One such act, he was told, would be voting in the October elections. On the Friday before those elections (which were held on Sunday), the male members of the one department I visited that day received letters from the army, requiring them to make appointments for interviews on the following Monday. No reason was given. My friends assumed this was yet another "subtle" attempt to concentrate their minds over the election weekend. By early December the expected purge had begun. Over 70 senior academics throughout Poland were dismissed from their posts (though not from their institutions), "verification"—political vetting—was to begin early this year, and a party spokesman announced that "universities had to uphold the principles of socialist education and that lecturers had to be measured against these principles."

Finally, a number of academics with foreign invitations have for some years been refused passports. Since foreign materials are so hard to get, and the academics' sense of isolation from the Europe to which they profoundly and defiantly insist they belong is so deep, this is a painful blow. Again, as is characteristic of most Polish repression, the barrier between the East which oppresses them and the West which has so much they lack and yearn for is not impermeable; but it is real and palpable. Many Poles do travel, and professional literature sent to professional addresses (though not to private homes) stands a good chance of getting through. But no one will be surprised if it does not, and one must take care what one sends. I am told that problems connected with isolation from latest developments, let alone equipment, are particularly strong in the hard sciences. They are certainly not small in the fields with which I am familiar. Apart from whiskey, the best present one can bring a Polish intellectual is a good book.

WHAT results from this unholy mixture, unique in the bloc, "a country," as Adam Michnik puts it, "where the nation strives for freedom and autonomy, and the authorities try to force it back into a totalitarian corset"? Not, it must be said, terror or even, among most people I met, immediate fear. While the authorities' continuous repression appears to retain pragmatic usefulness—it stops strikes—it has lost symbolic power. And the regime's repression is so uneven—some heroes do get passports, some non-heroes do not—that it is doubtful whether even a draconian law will be enforced systematically. No one, for example, seemed to know what use the regime would make of the harsh new law on universities. Not that anyone considered this new law, and the huffing and puffing accompanying it, to be encouraging signs. But optimists said to me, "We'll survive. We've had to live with such laws before. Poland is still far from being Russia," while pessimists replied, in effect, "Given the continuing crisis the situation can only get worse. This law will be enforced and there may be harsher laws to follow. And Poland may well become Russia." Instead of fear one has frustration and wary apprehension. Of course good should triumph, but Polish history does not give one much reason to bet on it, and Poland's neighbors are not keen to help it along. Many futures are possible; some of the most plausible are less than attractive. And no one is a short-term optimist.

In the meantime, one waits, struggles, and decent people continue to behave decently. None of this is easy. Some of the most courageous people of principle I met are very, very tired: tired of the petty frustrations and idiocies of daily life in "people's Poland"; tired of that single conversation, so exhilarating to a foreigner; tired of constantly struggling for the fate of Poland; tired of a life where so many decisions and acts—inconsequential in "normal" societies—are moral decisions; tired, in effect, of constantly having to be morally serious; drained from constant material, psychic, and moral strain and the knowledge that it might go on forever and might get worse.

Living through a war must be something like this. In most ways, of course, it is easier to live in Poland now than during war. Hardly anyone is killed, no one lives in terror, and though the struggle is recognized to be a long one, morale is strong. It is more like living under occupation, with rulers who won't go home. These rulers have, in their implacable overlords, a trump card which no one wants them to play; they are also

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well versed in what Trotsky called "corridor skills." For the rest, state and society are in stalemate, which both sides expect to last some time, and there is no respite visible.

One morale-testing and sometimes sapping difference between the present situation and one of war is that the Polish regime is not outside the society (though it is alien to it). It holds the jobs, pay, economy, and political and administrative structures. Thus the system rests on greater and smaller complicities. As one officer of the secret police recently observed to an underground paper, "I have the impression that efforts have been made for many years to turn Poland into a country in which it is difficult not to be a scoundrel." The benefits of collaboration are material and obvious: foreign trips, access to dollars, job preferment, a better apartment sooner, unrationed gasoline (the present ration is 24 to 30 liters per month), non-market privileges, and so on. Not, I imagine (though I don't know), princely fortunes —Jaruzelski is not Edward Gierek, and anyway the whole country is so ramshackle that it is doubtful whether there is a great deal to spread around. But every bit extra counts when it is denied to everyone else. And the regime is adept at encouraging complicities, even among those—now an extraordinary number—who will do nothing gross.

I was told of a meeting between the Deputy Prime Minister, Mieczysław Rakowski, and leading literary and intellectual figures after the declaration of martial law. Knowing his audience well, since he had been among them for many years, he allegedly said, "You probably think that by refusing to cooperate with us the intelligentsia can force us to back down. That's not so. Czechoslovakia was a cultural desert for over ten years. Poland can be the same. *It's up to you.*" I spent an evening with a young academic who berated himself and his colleagues for holding on to their jobs, whereas younger aspirants would have to decide whether to take the oath of loyalty or not. He quoted an author (whose name I missed): "The Nazi occupation forced us to be heroes; this occupation forces us to be shit." I suggested that there was a significant area of moral space in between, but he, who obviously occupies that space and is no shit, refused to agree. So there is a good deal of melancholy.

People have to decide again and again: how much dealing with the regime is permissible? How much is too much? Have I gone too far? Have my friends gone too far? The choices are not enviable and they do not affect oneself alone. I had some of my most rewarding conversations with a young academic who had been active in Solidarity. She sought to explain to me some of the ways in which even one's most basic and private decisions get caught up in moral dilemmas. In "normal" societies, she argued, you would like to bring up your children to share your values, whatever they are. But so long as this system exists, our values are the opposite of its values. Should we teach our children to believe what we do, or to believe what we despise and to behave in ways we would not behave?

Apart from such "first-order" concerns—what should *I* do?—this constant call on moral decision breeds a variety of second-order preoccupations, some of them wise, subtle, and discriminating, some suspicious, some fundamentalist, some dogmatic and extreme. Not all of this is socially or politically healthy. It is fed by, and feeds, the traditional divisions between "realists" and "romantics" which have bedeviled Polish politics for centuries and have made realism seem (and often be) opportunism and idealism seem (and often be) utopianism. Poland does not need these divisions to add to its list of problems, but in the present conditions they seem inescapable.

Of course a great many people negotiate this chasm realistically and honorably—it is, after all, a skill they have had some practice in acquiring. One friend, for example, works in a small academic department, several of whose members are in the party. He explains their motives without rancor: one is scared, one is a careerist, one likes to travel. Personal relations at work are civil and he does not suspect them of undue patriotic diligence. He thinks it unlikely that they will report on other members of the department, and discussion, as I have said, is candid. But he will have nothing to do with them socially; they will never enter his home.

There is, however, another option, and many Poles, particularly young ones, are taking it. That is to opt out. The most clear-cut way is to leave. Poland has suffered a brain drain of enormous proportions from which it will not quickly recover. Motives are various: danger if one stays, exhaustion, hope of economic betterment, inability to practice one's vocation or practice it properly, the wish to get far away from Russia, and many others. The consequences are the same. Many of the most talented and outspoken Poles have been lost to Poland.

Among those who stay, many of the best educated do not enter, or they leave, state employment, but drive taxis, become tradesmen, go into private business. Again the reasons are various, sometimes political, sometimes moral, sometimes financial. Among academics I met several who specialize in arcane theoretical areas because it is impossible to publish truthfully anything related to politics or current affairs. An important question which Poles generally, and the intelligentsia especially, ask is, what will be the result for Poland of all this highly talented opting-out? And the problem is not just what Poland loses when many of its best people opt out, there is also the question of who takes their place: careerists, dopes, thugs. Thus the notorious Polish "negative selection" continues and now it need not even be

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deliberate. The jobs remain and *someone* will be found to fill them.

GIVEN the all-pervasive hatred and distrust of "them," the "Reds," the "Communists," it is inconceivable that the party will find people of moral and intellectual stature to replace those whom it has driven out. For there is one thing on which "society" is now agreed: its misfortunes derive from the system of power, not from a Gomułka, Gierek, or Kania whose replacement might do things differently. (When asked why my parents had not visited Poland after the war, I explained in terms of my father's anti-Communist activity. Several people who hardly knew me and had never met him asked me to pass on their congratulations.) Last August the New York *Times Magazine* published a moving account by Michael T. Kaufman, its Warsaw bureau chief, of a visit to Poland by his father, an eighty-two-year-old ex-member of the Polish Communist party. This man had sat in Polish prisons for 9½ years with, among others, Adam Michnik's father, Ozjasz Schechter. Among the many intelligent comparisons which the old man makes between pre- and post-war Poland, one seems to me particularly striking:

> He said that when he was a young Communist organizer in the 1920's, people in Poland had many ways to explain and account for their unhappiness and dissatisfaction. "There was a pluralism of blame," he said. "A worker might blame the factory owner, some anti-Semites blamed wealthy Jews, Jews said the problem lay with anti-Semites, and the peasants resented wholesale merchants. Others pointed to Germans or Ukrainians as the source of the trouble. Meanwhile, we Communists, a small group, ran around saying, no, it's not a question of individual grievances, it is the system that is to blame. Now, after 50 years, I come back and what do I see? The whole nation knows perfectly well that the problem lies with the system and only the leaders are saying, no, the difficulties are the fault of individuals, former leaders, mistaken politicians, or, as during the anti-Semitic purges of 1968, Jews."

So, unless there is some breakthrough, the nature of which I cannot imagine and some forms of which I fear to imagine, the impasse between state and society will continue. Each side is strong enough to thwart the other's deepest ambitions, but not to realize its own. For the immediate future, it seems to me that Adam Michnik's prognosis, smuggled out of jail as he awaited his recent trial, will prove accurate:

> Yes, it is possible to govern in this way. So long as geopolitics is favorable, this system may last for quite some time. But it cannot rid itself of the stigma of an alien, imposed garrison. Repression has lost its effectiveness. Our imprisonment does not frighten anyone, nor will anyone be enslaved by it. This has been the case for the past five years.

Michnik goes on to offer grounds for his heroic and profound optimism:

> They [the rulers] are much too confident. They forget that the sociology of surprise is hidden in the nature of the Leading System [Communism]. Here, on a spring morning, one may wake up in a totally changed country. Here, and not once, Party buildings burned while the commissars escaped clad only in their underwear. Edward Gierek, so beloved by Brezhnev and Helmut Schmidt, so respected by Giscard d'Estaing and Carter, within a week traveled from the heights of power into oblivion. *Sic transit gloria mundi*. . . .

Poland's postwar history, and in particular Solidarity and its extraordinary and continuing aftermath, are striking testimonies to the "sociology of surprise." And it can be witnessed elsewhere in the bloc. One of the characteristics of political development in the satellite countries of Central and Eastern Europe has been, as a recent study put it, that "the whole vast apparatus of domination which seemed omnipotent and omnipresent the day before, disintegrates the next day." And it may be that Poland, unlike its neighbors, will avoid what has traditionally followed that collapse in Poland itself, in Hungary, in East Germany, and in Czechoslovakia:

> Once popular resistance is broken by external force (or even by no more than a threat of external force) the whole apparatus of domination (with a few changes at the very top) is reconstituted with remarkable ease. In an essentially unchanged form, it again attains that character of practical immovability and solidity which can even result in the memory of its collapse fading from the consciousness of its subjects—at least until the time when its next crisis approaches.*

Poland is already an astounding exception in that the apparatus has only been able to reconstitute itself, not the cowed or hopeless population which has been the other pillar of "really existing socialism." I have no doubt that this Polish exceptionality will continue. Sadly, I also have no doubt that its bearers will continue to pay dearly for a system they neither want nor deserve. I hope Michnik's optimism will ultimately be vindicated, though I am not confident that it will be. I also hope that worse will not befall Poland, though I am not confident that it will not.

* Ferenc Fehér, Agnes Heller, and György Markus, *The Dictatorship Over Needs* (1983).

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Naked Racial Preference

Carl Cohen

THE Board of Education in Jackson, Michigan, between 1972 and 1981, repeatedly laid off high-seniority white teachers to protect the jobs of others, with less seniority, who were "Black, American Indian, Oriental, or of Spanish descendancy." Those white teachers contend that they were discriminated against unjustly on the basis of their race, denied their constitutional right to the equal protection of the laws. Are they correct? This question—in the case of *Wendy Wygant, et al.* v. *Jackson Board of Education*—is now before the United States Supreme Court. The outcome is likely to have substantial impact upon what is loosely called "affirmative action."*

All parties in this matter agree that unjust discriminatory practices must be uprooted, and that affirmative steps to achieve that end remain in order. All parties agree that when persons have been directly injured by racial discrimination they are entitled to a remedy, and that to give such remedies the use of racial classifications may sometimes prove essential. Affirmative action, in its wholesome forms, is not at issue in this case. However, the teachers whose jobs were protected in Jackson had not been discriminated against, and the teachers whose jobs were sacrificed to protect them had not discriminated against anyone. What is here at issue is the species of affirmative action properly described as naked racial preference.

I

"EQUAL Justice Under Law" is the inscription carved into the frieze of the United States Supreme Court Building. The thrust of this principle is not merely the assurance that legal categories are to be applied fairly, but that some categories, intrinsically unfair, are not to be applied at all. Classifications by race (using "race" here and in all that follows as a shorthand for the families of ethnic criteria—race, color, religion, national origin, etc.) are those chiefly to be guarded against. To be denied what one is otherwise entitled to on grounds of race violates the constitutional expression of that same principle, appearing in the Fourteenth Amendment: "No state shall . . . deny to any person under its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

Because of the long history of injustices done on racial grounds, however, and the need to give appropriate remedy for them, the use of racial classifications cannot now be precluded absolutely. So we ask: when does equal justice under law permit the uses of racial classification, and when does it forbid them?

To this question the answers thus far given by the Supreme Court have been incomplete. Some principles are quite firmly established: racial classifications are invariably *suspect*, because their use tends to be, and traditionally has been, damaging and cruel. Jobs or other benefits in short supply given to some on the basis of their race must be taken from others on the basis of their race; hence no such racial distributions, whatever their alleged objective, can be "benign." Any use of racial classifications, therefore, must be subjected to what the courts have come to call "strict scrutiny." Weaker standards the Supreme Court has repeatedly rejected.

Thus, it will not be sufficient justification for the use of racial categories that they are plausible devices to achieve worthwhile ends, or that they are used in programs agreed upon by a majority of those immediately concerned, or that the intention of their users is honorable, or that there is some rational basis for their use. No. For the defense of racial and other suspect classifications it must be shown that the governmental interest served in applying them is *compelling*. Further, this defense

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* Wygant and seven other tenured teachers lost in the Eastern District Court of Michigan in 1982 (546 F. Supp. 1195), and lost again in the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals in 1984 (746 F. 2d 1152). The case was argued orally before the Supreme Court (#84-1340) on November 6, 1985. Supreme Court decisions on related matters in the past have been long delayed; in this matter the final resolution will come quickly—very probably in the spring of 1986, and conceivably even sooner.

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must show that to serve that compelling state interest, the racial categories used are *necessary*, no alternative being available. Yet further, it must be shown that the racial instrument applied has been *precisely tailored* to achieve the compelling objective in view.

Can a standard so high ever be met? Yes. If identifiable persons have been injured by racially discriminatory conduct, the need for a remedy that will make them whole is compelling. To determine the appropriate beneficiaries of the remedy devised—to right the wrongs done—the use of the racial categories that underlay the original injury may be necessary. And the racial instrument applied may be carefully designed to compensate all and only those injured, in appropriate form and degree. The test of strict scrutiny is not insurmountable—but it was designed, by the Supreme Court, to ensure that racial classifications would be used only in very special circumstances. From the standard of strict scrutiny this much may be confidently deduced: the use of a racial classification that imposes a serious burden upon innocent persons cannot be justified if those who benefit from that use are not themselves the victims of identifiable racial discrimination.

II

How does the teacher layoff plan, adopted by the Jackson Board of Education and the Jackson teachers' union in 1972, fare when judged on these principles? To answer, the workings of that plan must be explained. It gave explicit preference by race, but in a way that partly obscured this fact. "Minority-group personnel" were defined as "employees who are Black, American Indian, Oriental, or of Spanish descendancy." A "goal" for "minority racial representation" was established: racial proportions among the faculty were to be the same as racial proportions among the students. Layoffs then took place by reverse seniority, "*except that at no time will there be a greater percentage of minority personnel laid off than the current percentage of minority personnel employed at the time of the layoff*" (Article XII, Section B.1, of the Jackson Schools teacher contract; emphasis added).

The percentage of minority students in the Jackson schools was, and is, and for the foreseeable future will be, much higher than the percentage of minority teachers. The goal of equating them being unattainable, this plan operated inexorably (and remains in effect) as a contractual *ratchet*—the relative number of minority teachers is steadily raised, but it can never be lowered. Non-minority teachers, with seniority such that they would not otherwise have been laid off, have been laid off again and again. One of the eight white petitioners in this case was laid off eight separate times over nine years as a consequence of this device; another, Wendy Wygant, lost employment (and the seniority benefits that go with employment) for a total of more than three years. Under this contract in Jackson, keeping one's job as a teacher depends critically upon one's race.

No defense of this layoff plan is possible on the ground that it is a remedy called for by earlier discrimination against minority teachers in the Jackson schools. No one contends that any of the minority teachers here given preference was ever discriminated against, or injured unjustly in any way, because of race. This is of central importance. The behavior of the Jackson School Board was scrutinized (in 1979) by a Jackson County court in the course of an entirely separate proceeding. Referring to the same contract in which the now-disputed layoff provision appears, that court concluded that "there is no history of overt past discrimination by the parties to this [labor] contract."

This finding has never been contravened. No court, no legislative body, no administrative agency—and no Jackson School Board—has ever found that the Jackson Board of Education engaged in unlawful racial discrimination. Justifying Jackson's racial preference now as redress for some earlier discriminatory injury is simply out of the question.

III

The ethnic numbers game is an ugly but pervasive element in this case. It is a game that ought not to be played at all—but if it is to be played the rules must be at least rational. When, in categories of employment traditionally segregated, the numerical "balance" of the races is at issue, the only rational standard for judging it is the existing balance—i.e., actual racial proportions—in the labor pool from which all employees in the disputed category must come. So said the Supreme Court explicitly in an earlier case.

The relevant labor pool for schoolteachers consists of all those receiving degrees in education, and who are certified teachers, in that state. In Michigan colleges and universities, blacks were awarded (in 1975-76) 10 percent of the degrees in education. In 1980-81, when blacks constituted 9.7 percent of the population of Michigan, and Wendy Wygant was laid off for the seventh time to protect minority teacher ratios, minorities constituted *13.5* percent of the teachers in the Jackson schools. In other words, the number of "minority-group personnel" *exceeded* their number in the relevant labor pool by at least 30 percent.

Nor do these figures tell the whole story. In the school year 1981-82, the percentage of minority administrators in the Jackson schools was 19.6; the percentage of minority coaches was 18.3; the percentage of minority teacher aides was 29.6. If preferential protection were justifiable in Jackson to compensate for numerical imbalance, that compensation would more justly have been given to whites. Wendy Wygant and her fellow non-minor-

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ity teachers were the victims of racial favoritism so blatant that it is rightly called naked.

IV

If the Jackson layoff scheme cannot be justified as remedial, what might be offered in its defense? First proposed is a theory of contract. "This layoff provision is part of a collective bargaining agreement"—argues the Board, in effect—"reached through a process in which the duly elected representatives of all the teachers participated. Eighty percent of the teachers in the negotiating union were white; they had the opportunity to reject that contract if they thought it unfair. From the results of the democratic process some gain and some lose. White teachers who wound up losers in this process cannot now claim to be exempt from the provision of a contract bargained for by their own union."

This argument fails utterly. Collective bargaining between employers and democratic trade unions is indeed a treasured process. But the constitutional guarantee of equal justice—the guarantee that certain highly suspect classifications will not be used with damaging result, save under the compelling need to give redress for injury—cannot be bargained away.

No organization has a more intense interest in preserving the authority of collective-bargaining agreements than the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), AFL-CIO. Although not a party directly involved in this case, the AFT submitted a brief *amicus* in support of Wendy Wygant and her fellow petitioners—and in it rejected categorically the claim that the constitutional injury done to them may be "insulated from judicial scrutiny" or "constitutionally justified because it is included in collective bargaining agreements." If all that were necessary to validate the use of racial classifications by a public employer were a vote of approval by employees, it is a virtual certainty that many American school districts now healthily integrated would be segregated still. "[A]n individual teacher's right to be free from employer decisions based on race," concludes the AFT, cannot "be waived by fellow employees."

The Jackson Board of Education is a public employer, from whom the highest standards of constitutional integrity may be demanded. Its conduct overriding the constitutional rights of employees cannot be defended on the ground of a bargain with a union. No defense of preferential instruments can be even minimally plausible unless it deals with the substance of those instruments, not merely the method of their adoption.

V

The substantive justification of racial preference proposed by the Board (on its second theory) is the alleged need for *same-race* role models. Only the visible presence of minority-group members in positions of authority and esteem, it argues, can give minority schoolchildren the self-confidence they need to break out of the long continued cycle of socioeconomic depression.

This is an old argument, not entirely without merit; here it is invoked crudely. Social gain is likely when minority-group members are visible in the public schools. But the extent of that gain, even the reality of it, is quite uncertain; it has never been empirically established. There is no good evidence concerning the relationship between the measurable success of students and the degree of race-match between them and their teachers. Even a systematic study of the effect of same-race role models on performance, contends one scholar, "does not appear to exist."*

In the context of this case, moreover, the role-model argument cuts two ways. Small psychological gains may be achieved by protecting the jobs of additional minority teachers; such gains are likely to be converted to losses when it is widely believed (and true) that those minority "role models" occupy their posts only as the result of special favor given to them because of their race. Even the stature of minority teachers who sought no racial favors and received none is eventually undermined by such devices. For role models that are truly positive and effective, naked racial preference is counterproductive.

Teachers *are* role models for their students. By example as well as instruction, they influence and motivate their students, imparting values as well as knowledge. The presence of teachers of differing races and cultural backgrounds does tend to foster self-confidence and understanding. But what follows from all this? Of the many factors that contribute to the making of a role model, race is but one; in the making of a wholesome role model, the teacher's being of the same race as the student is of relatively little importance. More critical by far are those aspects of the teacher's character and conduct that bear directly upon school activity: intellect, effective speaking and writing, commitment to students, honesty and curiosity, fairness and absence of prejudice. A student is better served (as Justice Thurgood Marshall once suggested) by an excellent teacher role model of another culture than by a poor teacher role model of his own culture.

The same-race role-model theory—as federal courts have repeatedly pointed out—leads when extended (and traditionally did lead) to the general *segregation* of the races in public-school systems. Indeed, the heaviest reliance upon this argument in school-desegregation cases has been placed by those seeking to justify the segregation of min-

* M.W. Clague, "Voluntary Affirmative Action Plans in Public Education: Matching Faculty Race to Student Race," 14 *Journal of Law and Education* No. 3, July 1985.

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ority faculty in primarily minority schools. The argument has been consistently, and rightly, rejected.

Finally, even if the benefits of same-race role models had been shown to be substantial in some school contexts (which is not the case), those could only be contexts in which previously there had been very little minority presence, or none at all. In settings like Jackson, where the percentage of minority teachers has for some time been greater than the minority percentage in the population at large, and markedly exceeds the minority percentage in the relevant labor pool, the preferential protection of *additional* minority teachers against layoff on the ground that they are essential as role models cannot be taken seriously.

The same-race role-model theory is of dubious merit in general, worthless here. In this case the persons advantaged by the layoff plan had never been racially hurt, and the persons hurt by the layoff plan had never been racially advantaged. To justify the racially-based constitutional injury done by such a plan, some utterly compelling governmental interest would have to be shown. An interest weighty enough to serve that purpose is difficult even to imagine. The alleged need for additional same-race role models cannot hope to serve as that compelling end.

The positions of the parties in this case call upon the Supreme Court to pass judgment on the same-race role-model argument as a defense of racial preference in employment. The opinion handed down will greatly affect the inclination of all employers, private as well as public, to rely upon that argument in giving preference on the basis of race. The importance of *Wygant* lies partly in this.

VI

WHAT plausible defense of the Jackson preferential layoff plan remains? It is constitutionally justifiable, argued the Federal District Court, because "minority teachers were 'substantially' and 'chronically' *underrepresented* on the Jackson School District faculty in the years preceding the adoption of the affirmative-action plan" (emphasis added). The Federal Circuit Court agreed. We may call this third theory the argument from underrepresentation. It has only two failings: (1) its premise (that minority teachers were underrepresented) is false; and (2) even if that premise were true, it could not justify this racial preference. Here we get to the nub of the matter.

How could the lower courts have reached the extraordinary conclusion that minority teachers were "underrepresented" in the Jackson School District? In the ethnic numbers game the standard measuring rod (as noted above) is the percentage of minority employees in the relevant labor pool. On that standard, the figures given above plainly show that the Jackson schools certainly were not discriminating against blacks in 1980-81, although they may have been discriminating against whites.

The lower courts explicitly noted this standard in this case—but then refused to apply it. What numerical standard did they apply? The percentage of minority *students* in the school district! It did not matter how many black teachers were in fact available in Michigan, said the courts; minorities were "substantially and chronically underrepresented" because the ratio of black students to white students was greater than the ratio of black teachers to white teachers. And on what ground was this new standard defended? On the ground that teachers are role models for their students! Nothing can replace the words of the District Court:

> [I]n the setting of this case, it is appropriate to compare the percentage of minority teachers to the percentage of minority students in the student body, rather than with the percentage of minorities in the relevant labor market. It is appropriate because teaching is more than just a job. Teachers are role models for their students. This is vitally important because societal discrimination has often deprived minority children of other role models.

In superficially plausible passages like this one, well-meaning but confused, the seeds of racial bitterness are planted and germinate. The argument is a bald non sequitur. From the fact that minority children need positive role models it is inferred, uncritically, that only same-race role models will serve; but even if that oversimplification were true, it certainly would not follow that to provide such same-race role models the *proportion* of minority teachers must equal the proportion of minority students. Such a quota—and in use it was a quota in the strict sense, since persons in other racial categories lost their jobs as a consequence of its application—is nothing short of outrageous. The principle upon which it relies is that every ethnic subset, every national, religious, and racial minority in every school population, has a constitutional entitlement to a proportion among its public-school teachers equal to the proportion that subset constitutes among public-school students.

This principle is not merely difficult to apply, it is internally incoherent because of the mix and overlap of groups. The objective confusedly in mind is not merely distant, it is utterly unrealizable, for reasons both logical and factual. Yet the conclusion that minorities were "underrepresented" among Jackson teachers could only have been reached with that principle and that objective assumed. Additional same-race role models had somehow to be shown to be a compelling need; their overpowering importance is therefore first asserted, and racial preference then defended on the ground that the critical function served by same-race role models can only be fulfilled when the number of minority teachers becomes propor-

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tional to the number of minority students. In *Wygant*, reasoning of this caliber cost teachers their jobs.

Proportionality by race among public-school faculties has previously been before the U.S. Supreme Court. In *Hazelwood School District* v. *United States*, in 1977, the claim that minority teachers were underrepresented was based on a comparison of the proportion of minorities among the teachers with the proportion of minorities among the general population. That comparison was rightly rejected by the Court, and with its rejection went this warning: "When special qualifications are required to fill particular jobs, comparisons to the general population (rather than to the smaller group of individuals who possess the necessary qualifications) may have little probative value." Gently put.

But if the probative value of racial proportions among the general population is low, how much lower is the probative value of racial proportions among student populations? Demographic factors bearing heavily upon the racial mix among students may have very little bearing upon teacher availability. The increasing departure of white families from the cities, and white students from the public schools, results in a steadily increasing proportion of minority students in urban public-school districts. In some cities that proportion exceeds 70 and even 80 percent. But the flow of teachers, white and black, is largely determined by considerations of very different kinds.

So long as the percentage of minority students in the public schools exceeds that of minority teachers—an increasing, not decreasing inequality—those who would apply the numerical standard used by the lower courts in this case are like dogs chasing their tails. To match the ratio of black or Hispanic students in a given district, black or Hispanic teachers must be drawn away from other districts—either blocking the pursuit of the same objective in other well-integrated districts, or reducing the number of minority teachers in districts where the proportion of minority students is small. For universal application the standard is absurd; by means of naked racial preference it might be achieved in a few districts, but only at the cost of resegregating, or tending to resegregate, others. Its general use would, in any event, undermine honest efforts to integrate all the public schools. Never was there a more painful case of zeal outrunning good sense.

Had the standard laid down in *Hazelwood*—that the appropriate comparison, if any, would be "[b]etween the racial composition of [the district's] teaching staff and the racial composition of the qualified public-school teacher population in the relevant labor market"—been applied in the present case, the conclusion forced (as I observed earlier) would be that, for mysterious reasons, minority teachers have been for some years overrepresented in the Jackson School District. But if the "relevant-labor-market" standard had been established by the Supreme Court, how could the lower courts have replaced it with a different standard of their own in this case?

The maneuver, technically tricky, went like this. Between the *Hazelwood* decision in 1977, and the District Court's decision in the present matter in 1982, yet another case of this kind—*Oliver* v. *Kalamazoo Board of Education*—had been tried, this one in the Western District of Michigan. There the trial court had accepted the percentage of black students in that district (Kalamazoo) as the basis for explicit hiring and layoff quotas. This decision was reversed upon appeal, its reliance upon percentages in the student population being manifestly in error.

But *Oliver* had not yet been reversed when *Wygant* was first decided, so the use of student percentages in *Oliver* was relied upon in this case by the Eastern District Court. By the time *Wygant* was argued on appeal, however, *Oliver* had been reversed—and yet the Sixth Circuit Court permitted, in Jackson, the use of student populations forbidden in Kalamazoo. How could it? It could, said the appellate panel, because in Kalamazoo the quota was imposed by a court, while in Jackson it was the product of a labor-management contract. Judicial remedies (said the court) are subject to stricter constitutional standards than are racially preferential programs devised by local governments.

The irony of this distinction is that a judicial remedy (even when mistakenly based on student populations, as in *Oliver*) is issued only where some formal finding of discriminatory wrongdoing has been made. In *Wygant*, where there was no such finding and could have been none, a racially preferential device was approved which, by the appellate court's own reasoning, would certainly have been struck down if any lower court had ordered it as compensatory relief! In this upside-down condition matters now stand.

VII

MIGHT the case for minority underrepresentation in Jackson be made hypothetically, by showing that if the layoff plan were not in effect, the decline in the number of minority teachers would result in their being inadequately represented? During oral argument before the Supreme Court the attorney for the Board made that try. Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, after observing that the Court would normally "look to see whether the government can demonstrate a compelling state interest to justify such a [racial] classification," went on to ask: "Now what is the compelling interest that the School Board asserts here? Is it to maintain a faculty-student ratio or is it some other purpose? What do you rely on today?" The Board's attorney first replied by saying that two factors, the need for integration and the

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need for a diversified faculty, were equally important. The exchange continued:*

Justice O'Connor: So the Board does rely essentially on a faculty-student ratio and the role-model rationale.

Attorney for the Board: Justice O'Connor, I didn't say that and I didn't mean that. I think what I was looking at specifically was, was it their duty to integrate, how to go about that integration, and certainly at the same time—and we make no apology for it—educationally—

Justice O'Connor: Integrate in hiring. You are talking about hiring employees?

This question the Board's attorney first evaded by remarking upon the racial complexion of the Jackson schools during the 1950's and 1960's which, according to him, led in 1972 to "the allocation of the faculty." He then continued:

Now, the reason it [race-based layoff] is addressed in Article XII is if you are not going to do something about layoffs is it going to be considered by the public as a good-faith effort to integrate?

Justice O'Connor: Maybe I can't get an answer, but I really would like to know what the compelling state interest is that you are relying on for this particular layoff provision in a nutshell.

Attorney for the Board: . . . to protect the gains made that was going to allow us to do that as we looked at what we certainly thought were some of the factors we ought to be looking at like faculty and wanting a diverse ethnic faculty, to protect that we had to have Article XII.

Justice O'Connor: To preserve a faculty-student ratio that the Board thought was appropriate?

Attorney for the Board: . . . If you are not going to protect them in a layoff, you are really going through an exercise in futility in hiring in the first place. We wanted them there. We had to have a method of protecting them. . . . If you are going to apply straight "inverse order [of seniority] to minorities" those gains were going to be long gone pretty quickly.

This is false. Years of experience in Jackson prove the contrary to be the case. Layoffs on a straight inverse-seniority basis were made in the very early 1970's, when the seniority of minority teachers was relatively lower than it was ten years later—and the percentage of minority teachers at that time steadily increased. Again in 1974, when 75 layoffs were made, the Board refused to comply with the preferential provision in Article XII, whereupon the percentage of minority employees nevertheless went *up*, from 11.1 in 1974 to 11.4 in 1975. In 1981, had layoffs *not* been preferential, the minority-faculty proportion resulting would have remained at nearly 12 percent—higher than the percentage of minority teachers in the relevant labor pool. Racial preference cannot be defended here as necessary to protect integration already achieved. In every version, the argument from underrepresentation is hopeless.

VIII

THE argument from underrepresentation fails for a deeper reason: it relies upon the seriously mistaken assumption that, absent discrimination, all ethnic groups would be randomly distributed among all categories of employment. With this conviction tacitly in mind, every departure from random distribution is held explainable only by some form of ethnic oppression. A just society, on this view, will be a homogenized society. The reformer finds, of course, that reality does not approximate his version; having confounded equal treatment with numerical proportionality, he cannot rest content until the latter is achieved, since its absence is, for him, the sure mark of injustice. Statistical "underrepresentation" thus becomes the warrant for racially preferential instruments to set things right.

This vision underlying the argument from underrepresentation is not merely unrealistic, it is unwholesome. Even where discrimination is wholly absent, patterns of employment (or recreation, or education, etc.) are rarely random across ethnic groups, and for good reasons. Human beings commonly work and play, live and study, with fellow members of the groups—religious, racial, national—with which they most closely identify themselves. Ethnic clumps, the natural product of what we regard with pride as "cultural pluralism," may be broken up by force, but they will re-form as soon as the external pressure is removed. The evidence for this is overwhelming, both from the social sciences and from everyday experience. Decades of studies, sociological and historical, by scholars around the globe who have carefully noted and discounted discriminatory factors, leave the matter in no doubt. Cultural homogeneity—numerical proportionality in employment and other critical spheres—never can be real, never should be thought ideal.

The error is dangerous. If the numerical "representation" of Jews or blacks is taken to be no more than a factual report of the frequency with which the members of those groups are found, or not found, in certain employments (or other spheres) the numbers may be innocuous. When those reports are so framed as to imply that random distribution is a *moral* standard and that departures from it therefore indicate the presence of "societal discrimination," the use of numbers proves insidious. Even if (as was not the case in *Wygant*) comparisons are made with the "relevant labor pool," statistically even distributions are not to be expected. Living and working patterns

* These passages are quoted from the *Official Transcript of Proceedings Before the Supreme Court of the United States*, November 6, 1985, Case # 84-1340, pp. 30-33.

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among Mormons and Episcopalians are likely to prove very different; so also will be the workforce distributions of Italians and Swedes. Numerical proportionality in the outcome is not simply a crude standard, it is a wholly unsuitable standard by which to judge the fairness of a social process.

Of course some ethnic patterns *are* the result of discrimination, overt and covert; the deliberate exclusion of blacks, Jews, and others has been commonplace. To suppose that invidious maltreatment never had a role in creating ethnic clusters would be as wrong-headed as to suppose that all clustering entails such maltreatment. Causal factors in this sphere are exceedingly tangled. Nothing could be clumsier, or more obtuse, than social instruments designed on the assumption that one factor, invidious racial discrimination, is the paramount cause of every non-random ethnic distribution. Yet it is precisely upon such an assumption that racially preferential programs—in *Wygant* and in uncountable other contexts—are founded.

Ironically, the drive to achieve racial "balance" has consequences the very reverse of those hoped for. Wanting racial justice, the advocates of group proportionality do racial injustice; seeking to eliminate discrimination by race, they encourage and even employ it. The racial bitterness it has taken our country decades to reduce is now recreated and exacerbated by deliberate racial favoritism.

IX

The premise of the argument from underrepresentation is plainly false. In Jackson the numbers show it false on its face. And even if that were not so, the argument wrongly supposes that non-random ethnic distributions entail "societal discrimination" as their cause. But the lower courts in *Wygant* erred more profoundly still. Not only did they use the wrong numbers, and then go on to draw unwarranted conclusions from the numbers they did use—they did all this relying upon a distorted conception of constitutional and moral rights.

The lower court argued in effect: "The failure to achieve the correct ratios in the Jackson schools proves societal discrimination. Those hurt by this discrimination are off the stage and cannot be compensated; those who did the hurting are also long gone and cannot make restitution. But because minority *groups* have been unfairly treated over generations, those groups are entitled to favored treatment now. Race-based layoffs, protecting low-seniority members of such groups who have not themselves been discriminated against, are but one device to accomplish this."

The burden imposed by racially-preferential devices, however, is not carried by a group; the majority feels nothing. It is individuals from whom the price is exacted—Wendy Wygant and unnamed others who are thus made to pay for wrongs they did not do, to persons who were not wronged.

Naked racial preference is ultimately grounded upon *group-think*. But rights do not inhere in groups; they are possessed by persons, human beings, and it is deeply wrong to injure individual persons in pursuing the alleged interests of some racial class by advantaging its uninjured members. The equal protection of the laws is a guarantee upon which no qualification by race, or religion, or nationality can have any bearing whatever. In our Constitution, that protection is explicitly afforded in the *singular*, to "any person." As the Supreme Court has repeatedly affirmed, "The rights created by the Fourteenth Amendment are, by its terms, guaranteed to the individual" (*Shelley* v. *Kraemer*, 1948).

Blacks, Orientals, Jews, and many other groups have been historically discriminated against, often brutally. It simply does not follow, in morals or in law, that individual blacks, or Orientals, or Jews, who were not damaged are entitled now to special favor in the name of group redress. In this Republic, happily, that theory of collective rights has been rejected. The *Wygant* case gives to the Supreme Court a splendid opportunity to reaffirm this rejection in terms so clear and so forceful as to put an end, unambiguously, to group-think in American law.

Two recent Supreme Court opinions give promise. In *Bakke* (1978), striking down a race-based admission program in a medical school, Justice Lewis Powell made it clear that the goal of achieving "some specified percentage of a particular group merely because of its race or ethnic origin is not constitutionally permissible and constitutes discrimination for its own sake." In *Stotts* (1984), striking down a race-based promotion system in a municipal fire department, Justice Byron White, delivering the opinion of the Court, made it clear that "mere membership in the disadvantaged class is insufficient to warrant a [preferential] seniority award; each individual must prove that the discriminatory practice had an impact on him." And Justice O'Connor, in the same case, wrote that "a court may use its remedial powers . . . only to prevent future violations and to compensate identified victims of unlawful discrimination."

X

Finally, who is a member of what race? Homer A. Plessy was the central figure in the infamous case of *Plessy* v. *Ferguson* in which the "separate but equal" doctrine was approved by the Supreme Court in 1896. Plessy (according to his own petition) was seven-eighths white and one-eighth black, and "the mixture of colored blood was not discernible in him." He was a black man under Louisiana law; in other states he would then have been classified as white. How would the Jackson Board of Education classify

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him today? If black, such a person stands to enjoy a valuable employment benefit. If he claims it, who shall determine whether he is entitled to it? And by what criteria shall they decide?

Embarrassing these questions may be, but rhetorical they are not. In New York City in the autumn of 1985, when racial quotas were used in making police-department promotions, a rash of petitions was received from individual officers seeking to change the racial designation in their employment records to that of some minority. By such matters are we confronted unavoidably when once we begin, as a society, to "think with our blood."

Orientals are given preference in the Jackson schools, presumably because they were once discriminated against. The substantial Finnish community in Michigan is still discriminated against in some quarters—but Finns do not qualify for special treatment in Jackson, probably because not many of them remain there. There are not very many Orientals in Jackson either, but a third generation Chinese-American, whose mother and father may be university professors, will have his job specially protected in the Jackson schools because he is, in the parlance of affirmative-action officers, "a minority."

As for "Spanish descendancy"—who can say? If one's grandfather's name were Gonzales he is likely to be entitled to special protection in Jackson—unless that happened to be his maternal grandfather, in which case the rules are not clear. Between Supreme Court Justice Powell and the attorney for the Jackson Board of Education there took place, during oral argument, the following colloquy:

> *Justice Powell:* I was interested in the fact that minorities described in the collective bargaining agreement include blacks, American Indians, Orientals, or persons of Spanish descendancy. How in the world would you determine who is a person of Spanish descendancy?
>
> *Attorney for the Board:* Well, I didn't write that.
>
> *Justice Powell:* Pardon me?
>
> *Attorney for the Board:* I didn't write that. Hispanics may have been a better term. I guess we just didn't think about it, Justice Powell, at that point. I think we were looking at Hispanic people. [*Official Transcript*, pp. 42-43]

Wherever racial preference is given there must be rules—required mixtures of blood, and required epidermal hues, black or Indian or whatever—to determine racial membership. There must also be public officials with the authority to apply those rules. In the Jackson, Michigan schools today, as in the Jackson, Mississippi schools of an earlier day, such rules are no doubt applied with scrupulosity. Now, as then, it is a nasty business.

Here is the lesson of *Wygant*: the equal protection of the laws requires not merely the even-handed application of legal categories; it requires that every single person be protected against the invidious use of some categories. Above all, the categories to be abjured are those of race. If that is done, *Wygant* v. *Jackson Board of Education* will become a true landmark in American constitutional history.

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Son, Father, Judge

A Story

Hanoch Bartov

Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valor, and he was the son of an harlot: and Gilead begat Jephthah. And Gilead's wife bore him sons; and his wife's sons grew up, and they thrust out Jephthah, and said unto him, You shall not inherit in our father's house; for you are the son of a strange woman.

Then Jephthah fled from his brothers, and dwelt in the land of Tob, and there were gathered vain men to Jephthah, and went out with him. And it came to pass in process of time, that the children of Ammon made war against Israel. And it was so, that when the children of Ammon made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to fetch Jephthah out of the land of Tob. And they said unto Jephthah, Come, and be our captain, that we may fight with the children of Ammon. . . . And the elders of Gilead and the people made him head and captain over them: and Jephthah uttered all his words before the Lord in Mizpah.

And Jephthah sent messengers unto the king of the children of Ammon, saying, What have you to do with me, that you are come against me to fight in my land? And the king of the children of Ammon answered unto the messengers of Jephthah, Because Israel took away my land, when they came up out of Egypt, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and unto Jordan: now therefore restore those lands again peaceably. And Jephthah sent messengers again unto the king of the children of Ammon, and said unto him, Thus says Jephthah, Israel took not away the land of Moab, nor the land of the children of Ammon....

Howbeit the king of the children of Ammon hearkened not unto the words of Jephthah which he sent him. Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah, and he passed over Gilead, and Menashe, and passed over Mizpah of Gilead, and from Mizpah of Gilead he passed over unto the children of Ammon. And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If You shall without fail deliver the children of Ammon unto mine hands, then it shall be, that whatsoever comes forth from the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering. So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them; and the Lord delivered them unto his hands. . . .

And Jephthah came to Mizpah unto his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and she was his only child; besides her he had neither son nor daughter. And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! you have brought me very low, and you are one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back. . . .

—JUDGES, CHAPTERS 11-12

I

JUDGE for yourselves today in this matter between the elders of Gilead, its priests and scribes, my brothers the sons of my father, and me. Why did they hate me and why did they curse my name and my memory in the chronicles of Gilead and Israel? Which of my brothers, the sons of my father, have I maltreated and from which of the men of Gilead or any of the tribes of Israel have I ever taken anything?

My life is spread here before you, from the day I was born to my mother, Attar, daughter of Rechabel king of Tob, in the house of my father Gilead ben Yair at Mizpah, until I was gathered to my fathers, gray-haired and angry, six years after I smote the children of Ammon with a mighty blow.

In the land of Gilead Israel became a nation, and the deeds of our fathers, from the days of Abraham ben Terach to the days of the seed of Machir ben Menashe, are recounted on our tablets. Around the monument that Jacob built to commemorate his flight from Laban the Aramite, my ancestors built a shrine to the Lord of Hosts at Mizpah. In that shrine, across from my father's house, the priests and the scribes, my father's

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brothers, told me all those stories. As they spoke, I was at Jacob's side by the Jabbok ford when the angel wrestled with him until dawn but could not overcome him. Across a hundred generations, I see vividly before my eyes the day I first rode into the city of Penuel, the sword of Yair ben Machir girded to my right thigh, a squire among the squires of my father the judge. I seemed to myself like one who had seen God face to face, yet survived, like a man in whose ear a voice spoke, "Your name shall be not Jephthah, but Israel."

It is true indeed that I was a dreamer, and Joseph I loved from my earliest youth above all the others I had heard about from the priests and the scribes, my father's brothers. Like him, I was the son of the other woman, the beloved, the youngest of my father's sons. In my dreams I too saw my brothers, the sons of women my father had taken from Benjamin and from Ephraim and from Naftali, beating me fatally and casting my corpse into one of the wells, or selling me to the Ammonites, the Midianites, to the Ishmaelites. Thus spoke the judge my father when the spirit was upon him: "In Jephthah is renewed the ancient covenant between the Hebrews and the Aramites. You are like Jacob the son of Rebecca and like Joseph the son of Rachel, and now the blood of Attar flows also in your veins." And to my brothers he often said, "The Lord of Hosts will make you like Menashe and like Machir and like Gilead and like Rechabel."

As long as Gilead the judge my father lived, my brothers the sons of my father dared not touch the slightest hair of my head, and they buried their hatred of me deep within themselves. Also, well they knew that it was from fear of the powerful alliance between Gilead and the kingdom of Tob that the Ammonites had retreated across the Jabbok and southward. The land was quiet. Only upon my mother fell the curse of my brothers, the sons of my father. Like the life of our mother Rachel was the life of Attar, daughter of Rechabel. After she gave birth to me, God sealed her womb, and only after countless sacrifices at Mizpah and Shiloh and Bethel did she become pregnant again. The curse consumed the blessing. My mother had hard labor, and in childbirth both she and the infant girl died.

And then the whole curse came upon us. When Milkom king of Ammon heard that Attar daughter of Rechabel king of Tob had died, he said to himself, now the king will break his covenant with Gilead. And at the head of his troops, Midianites mounted on camels among them, Milkom crossed the Jabbok. Between Penuel and Mahanaim the battle raged, and God gave Ammon and Midian into the hands of Gilead ben Yair, who pursued them to the Jabbok. At the ford of the river we fought the remnants of Milkom's army, and my older brothers and I formed a screen around my father to his left and to his right. Before my eyes my father fell by the sword of Ammon, and Milkom and his men forded the river and fled for their lives. That was the first time I had gone out to battle, and when I saw Gilead ben Yair, my father, lying on his face, I knew: if I wanted to keep on living, I had better get up and flee before the hands of my brothers, the sons of my father, fell upon me.

I know not what my brothers were plotting to do to me. The cries of victory mingled with the laments of the fallen. Darkness covered the hills of Gilead, and my heart prophesied the worst. We were formed into two camps, Gilead alone and Tob alone, and my brothers and I were in the Gileadite camp. If it be murder my brothers are plotting, they will get me tonight, before we set out on our return to Mizpah, and they will say: "An Ammonite killed the boy." If I hasten and ask for asylum in the Tobite camp, then the priests and the scribes, my uncles, will slander me and proclaim it in Mizpah, declare it in the courtyards of Jabesh-Gilead, that Jephthah had fled to Rechabel's camp, he has no portion in Gilead and no stake in Israel. In the darkness I sit with my hands on my sword, and woe is me if I spill the blood of my brothers first and woe is me if they touch me first. And now a voice cried out: "Jephthah, Jephthah, where are you? I am Barzilai, your brother, son of your father!" In one and the same month we were born to our father, I to my mother and Barzilai to Aksa the daughter of Affiyach, and he alone was not consumed with hatred for me. "Run away," whispered Barzilai in my ear. "In the entire Gileadite camp tonight, darkness alone is on your side, my brother Jephthah. Run away."

II

And thus was I exiled from my country and from my native land and from my father's house, and I was eighteen years old. Neither to Rechabel nor to his camp north of the Jabbok did I turn seeking shelter. Only my two faithful companions were at my side wherever I went, my sword and my bow, they and my longings for my father's house in Mizpah and the humiliation with which I had been humiliated by my brothers, the sons of my father. Wherever I went, they went. With them I wandered far to the land of the sons of Kedem, to the borders of the awful desert. Like the beast of the field and the fowl of the air I fed myself, I lived by my sword, and my quiver of arrows dealt more fairly by me than the ten sons of my father. One by one there gathered about me men in sorrow, and distress, destitute and reckless, who had also been thrust from their homes and families and countries, and our life in this troop became our home, family, and native land. Swiftly our fame went forth in the land, from the desert to Aram Naharaim and even to Lebanon and Hermon. Three times seven years I marched at the head of my three hundred

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fellows, all of them learned in war, from among the boldest men of the land, mounted upon camels and with us slaves and maidservants and cattle in great number, and laden with booty of the wars we fought on the way to the mountains of Edom and the land of Kedar and Aram-Damascus and Aram-Tsova. Not as a Gileadite and not as an Aramite came I to Rechabel king of Tob, but as a king with his regiments. At the feet of my mother's father I laid necklaces and pendants and nose-rings from the treasures I carried with me. To give I came to the father of my mother, not to take. My glory, my three hundred fearless soldiers, all the wealth I brought along with me, and I sought nothing. Only this: no longer to live by the sword but to sojourn at the border of Gilead, to await the day.

This day, I knew, was certain and not distant. One and twenty years had I wandered in the lands of the east, and during those years the sons of Ammon had returned to press upon the children of Gilead. There had been no evil like them since the day Machir ben Menashe had settled in the land of Gilead. Throughout the years I dwelled in Rechabel's city, fighting the wars of the land of Tob, my heart was waiting, every day expecting the ambassador who would arrive and beg me to come and save Gilead. Spies sent I to Gilead, and from their mouths I heard what had been done unto my native land by my brothers the sons of my father, its priests and scribes. Brother raised hand against brother in the house of the judge at Mizpah, and the hands of all my brothers the sons of my father were raised against the flocks of the men of Gilead, their cattle, their fields, their women, their children, and all that they had, while the hands of the sons of Ammon, who had been crushing and oppressing them, were everywhere. Strongest of all was their hatred for the son of the other woman, for Jephthah. Well they know who can save Gilead and return its days to their former tranquility, but only when their last hope will be lost, when their last illusion vanishes, will they come down to me in the land of Tob.

I was sore distressed over the sufferings of my people, over the unwanted years, one and twenty and then ten years more. Were it not for the longing and the pain, my life would have been good in the land of Tob. During my ten years there as head of her armies I brought peace within her borders. The fear of Jephthah distanced every ill-wisher and enemy. I had houses and gardens and fflocks and herds and vineyards and fields, and I also took a wife in my fortieth year, Zilpah the daughter of my mother's brother Javin and the granddaughter of Rechabel, my mother's father. Only Zilpah did I love as I loved my mother. Yet this is the curse which pursues the house of our mother Rachel. Like Rachel's and like Attar's my mother was the life of Zilpah. And she died bearing my only daughter, Anath, whom I loved like my own soul.

III

TWICE my heart broke in my chest, for the sins of the priests and the deeds of the scribes, all of them my brothers, my father's sons. I bite my own flesh with my teeth, and these chronicles, neither adding nor omitting, I bring before you. Judge if you will between my brothers the sons of my father, and myself.

My daughter, my daughter Anath, for whom even the scribes have dared not invent imaginary brothers and sisters. "And but for her alone he had neither sons nor daughters," the scribes have written.

I suffer for her, for my only child. Even across a hundred generations, I still feel the pain of what the priests did to her.

I have leapt too far ahead. I was fifty years old. He lacked for nothing, the son of Gilead ben Yair, who when his father fell between Penuel and Mahanaim fled from his brothers into the desert and evil befell him not, because of the sword of Yair ben Machir and his own bow. I was second to the king of the land of Tob. His daughter's son. And when Javin the brother of Attar and Zilpah's father fell ill, all the princes of Rechabel and his advisers gathered in the king's courtyard and said as one man: "Jephthah will be king after you." May heaven and earth stand witness that I abhorred all these things, and that my soul had but one wish: to be summoned unto the house of my father the judge in Mizpah, to lift the yoke of Ammon from Gilead, and to be buried in the grave of my fathers the judges, the sons of Machir, Joseph, and Jacob, by the monument which he had raised when he left Aram.

I will conceal nothing, and what was done unto me by my brothers the sons of my father have I remembered all these years, and two and thirty years I prayed, upon rising and upon lying down to sleep, I prayed for that day which even if it hastens not, will surely come. It will surely come. When the patience of the nation will reach its end and none will be able to bear it, and the elders of Gilead, my brothers the sons of my father, will come and prostrate themselves at the entrance to my house, will rend their garments, will tear their gray hair and say, "Arise and be you our captain and do battle with the children of Ammon." And like Joseph the steward, when his brothers came to him in Egypt, I shall say: "Did you not hate me, and drive me out of my father's house, and why are you come to me now?" And they, besmirched with the dust of the land of Tob, scratching themselves until the blood flows, will cry and plead, "Come with us and be head and captain over all the inhabitants of Gilead. . . ."

And I, after much imploring, at the head of my three hundred troops and the troops of the land of Tob, return to Gilead, and save my people from the hand of the sons of Ammon. . . .

And one day it happened. Through the entrance

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to my house, their garments rent, ashes upon their gray heads, covered with blood, burst the elders of Gilead, its priests and its scribes, pleading for the life of Gilead. And I, after my prayers of two and thirty years, upon rising and lying down, was estranged from them, and I spit in their faces, and my dogs I set upon them, and severely sent them forth from my countryside. I stood trembling and fearful at the sight of my brothers kissing the hem of my garment and the dust of my shoes. Lord of Hosts, lowly and loathsome old men I see before me, not brave soldiers. How Gilead has been trampled underfoot, the land where Jacob strove with God and with men and overcame! I nearly prostrated myself too, nearly fell upon the necks of the elders. But only this, quietly, I said:

"And why are you come to me now when you are in distress?"

In my question all my brothers the sons of my father could hear the sorrow and the pity. And Barzilai, who on that night, between Penuel and Mahanaim, had stirred me to flee for my life, placed his hand under my thigh and in the name of all his older brothers spoke: "Therefore are we returned to you. And you shall be head and captain over all the inhabitants of Gilead, in the house of the judge of Mizpah shall you dwell and like our father Gilead and our father's father shall you judge over Israel, and God will give the children of Ammon over unto you."

And like Joseph before me I raised my voice in weeping and all my brothers the sons of my father fell upon my neck and wept, and I wept upon their necks. And when my spirit returned I said, "If you call me back to make war upon the sons of Ammon and to save Gilead—I shall come with you."

IV

MY DAUGHTER, my only child, whom I loved, Anath, I took with me when I went forth to return to my father's house at Mizpah. And Maacah, her maidservant, who after Zilpah's death had nursed her and was a mother to her. And my three hundred brave men, all of them mounted upon camels, who could aim at a strand of hair and not miss, I took when I went forth to break the yoke of Ammon.

And that the people gathered in Mizpah and set me over them as chief and as captain is written, truly, in the Book: "And Jephthah spoke all his words before God at Mizpah." But what were the words which I did speak in the ears of the men of Gilead? A youth of eighteen had fled from the sword of his brothers in the dead of night, and the second unto the king of Tob, fifty years old, was now summoned to sit upon the chair of his father the judge in Mizpah. How then did the scribes of Gilead, my brothers the sons of my father, not include in the chronicles even one sentence of what I said? Not in the tongue of a foreign nation did I speak on that day, and not in tricks of language. Everything I intended to do I enumerated in the hearing of the people who had gathered there. "I have come to bring peace unto Gilead," I said, "not war. I shall say unto the sons of Ammon, 'The sword of Yair ben Machir is drenched with all the blood it has spilled,' and if they will only attend to the words of peace I shall send them in the hands of my envoy, my runner, henceforth none shall mourn on either side of the Jabbok. Just as I have brought the blessing of peace unto the land of Tob," I said unto my brothers at Mizpah, "so shall I do unto Gilead, and the land will be at rest."

Thus I spoke, and upon the Lord of Hosts I swore to cleave unto His Name, to forgive my brothers that which they had done to me, and to treat them with goodness and mercy and to spread the tent of peace over Gilead and Israel. But the scribes of Gilead, my brothers the sons of my father, have blotted from the books all mention of these words which were like dew to those who had gathered at Mizpah. "All the sayings" of Jephthah do not amount to even a single sentence. Not by happy chance has my image been etched in the people's memory as aimless driftwood.

Rotten timber!

Have the scribes of Gilead spoken fairly of me, or falsehoods? Read for yourselves that which I sent forth in the hands of messengers to the king of the children of Ammon. Not my first message—"What have you to do with me, that you are come against me to fight in my land?"—but my second message wherein I refuted, in the full light of day, the claim of the king of Ammon that Israel had taken away his land when they came up out of Egypt, from Arnon even unto Jabbok and unto Jordan. Read well, if you please, in Chapter 11. A light-minded person? Rotten timber? Have you found in the chronicles of Israel in the hundred generations that have passed since then a more concise and pointed document than the lines which I sent by messengers to Milkom, king of the children of Ammon?

Indeed, the document was not omitted from the book by the scribes, my brothers the sons of my father. Read it and judge between them and Jephthah, fifty years old, second unto Rechabel king of Tob, who upon the threshold of the shrine at Mizpah swore: "The sun of my days is moving toward its evening. In fear of my father Gilead I swear neither to rest nor to slumber until Mizpah is secure and the sons of Jabesh bear not swords."

Thus spoke I before God at Mizpah. I sent runners with my first message of peace to the king of Ammon on the very day I returned to Mizpah, when the God of my fathers accepted the ram I sacrificed to Him upon His altar. And after the messengers had brought Milkom's reply, I hastened to send out my second and third and fourth messages. In my heart I said, as long as the runners are carrying messages back and forth between Miz-

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pah and Rabat-Ammon, blood will not be spilled. And the more messages there are, the easier it will be for Milkom to pull his men back beyond the Jabbok and to exchange war for peace.

Then the winter set in, and the rains were heavy, and as they came down the sons of Ammon went down also beyond the Jabbok, and were seen no more. Since the day Zilpah died giving birth to Anath, I and my household had enjoyed no days better than those months in the house of the judge of Mizpah, whose stones were black iron.

The winter passed, the rain ceased, and at the commencement of the barley harvest the children of Ammon returned, they and their herds and their flocks, and invaded the fields of Gilead, to bide and destroy. At the fords of the Jabbok did they cross the river, so the refugees told the elders and priests and the people who assembled in the courtyard of the shrine at Mizpah. And the princes and the people said: "Arise and save us from the hands of Ammon, for our spirit has weakened in the service of Israel." To avenge the death of Gilead ben Yair, my father, I too desired, and two and thirty years I had awaited this day. I feared not death, but on that day a sudden dread overcame me. Not of sleeping the sleep of death. What man will live and not fear death! A man of war have I been since my youth, and seven times seventy-seven have I seen it face to face, but never once has my enemy seen my back.

During that one winter in the judge's house at Mizpah I had seen how lonely was my only child Anath, having no one but me. I lay awake at night thinking of Anath's fate were I to fall by the sword. She was to stay in the house of the king of Tob, among her family and her friends, and upon my safe return from smiting Ammon I would bring her back to Mizpah too. Therefore I summoned Chimham, the son of my brother Barzilai, and sent him unto the king of Tob to say, "I am rallying my three hundred troops and all the men of Gilead to make war upon Ammon. Do you also rally your men between Jabesh and Penuel." And this too I said to Chimham: "Take Anath my only child and Maacah her maidservant and bring them to the king, and may this heap of stones and this monument bear witness that if God gives Ammon into my hand, my only child Anath shall be given to you for a wife when I return safely from the sons of Ammon."

V

FALSEHOODS have the scribes of Gilead, my brothers the sons of my father, written about me! With lies and deceit did the priests of Gilead, my brothers the sons of my father, sacrifice Anath my only daughter, and lies have they inscribed in the chronicles of the judges of Gilead and Israel!

Judge for yourselves between the elders of Gilead, its priests and its scribes, and me.

This is the vow I vowed to my God as I went forth to battle. What the elders and priests have testified that I said, namely, "Whatsoever comes forth from the doors of my house to meet me shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering," I never said. A man of war have I been since my youth, and among men whose swords are always drawn, who endangered their lives unto death, have I spent my days. It is the way of such men to speak in vows and in oaths, yet no one takes notice. And even if my brothers the sons of my father have spoken the truth about me, that when the spirit of God was upon me I did say, "Whatsoever comes forth from the doors of my house I will offer it up for a burnt offering," they and all the men of Gilead witnessed that when Chimham set forth as envoy to the land of Tob, he took with him Anath my daughter and Maacah her maidservant. No man remained within the house of the judge at Mitzpah, only the cattle and the sheep.

Whatsoever comes forth from the doors of my house!

My God, the God of Isaac, after what He swore to Abraham in the land of Moriah, would He demand a human sacrifice, my daughter, my only child, whom I loved, Anath?

If my brothers have told the truth about me—and that oath, again I swear across the hundred generations, for the life of me I remember it not! —it was not to sacrifice a human sacrifice that I vowed. A lamb, a calf, a fledgling turtledove, not my daughter who all Gilead knew had returned with Chimham to the house of the king of Tob.

At the head of my soldiers and all the men of Gilead and the land of Tob I sallied forth to the cruel battle. Yet the depths of my soul were weary of all the blood I had spilled. And also Ephraim heard not my cry and joined me not in the battle. But when the king of the sons of Ammon acted wickedly toward me to destroy the fields of Gilead and subdue the land and I saw that he heeded not the messages I had sent to him—I for peace and he for war—I took my life in my hands and went forth to the sons of Ammon. God gave them into my hand, and I smote Ammon a mighty blow. From Aroer to Minnith, even twenty cities, and to Abel Keramim, and the sword of Yair ben Machir I returned not to its scabbard until the sons of Ammon surrendered to the children of Israel.

And at the head of all my soldiers and all the forces of Gilead I returned to Mizpah, and the women came forth to greet us in every city with timbrels and with dances. Yet all the praises sung us by the bards and maidens from Abel Keramim rejoiced not my heart more than the sight of my daugher coming forth toward me and in her mouth the song Deborah had sung when there were disturbances in Israel and the people rallied: "So let all your enemies perish, O Lord. But let them that love Him be as the sun when it goes forth in all its might."

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There was neither end to my amazement nor boundary to my joy when Anath came forth from the doors of my house to meet me.

"When word arrived of what God the Avenger had wrought upon your enemies the sons of Ammon," said Anath, "I hurried forth to Mizpah, I and Maacah and the men whom the king had commanded to watch over me on the way. All night and all morning we rode, for I said, upon my father's return from smiting the children of Ammon, I shall go out first to meet him. Awake, awake Deborah. Awake, awake, utter a song. . . ."

Falsely have the scribes my brothers the sons of my father written, for I rent not my garments when I saw her. I rejoiced and delighted in my only child, in Anath. To the house of the Lord of Hosts, across from the judge's house I hurried, to burn a thanksgiving offering for the great victory God had granted Israel over the Ammonites. My last war. My sword which I gave into the hands of Chimham upon entering the courtyard of the house of God I would wear no more. Anath I would give to Chimham son of Barzilai for a wife, and the sword of Machir ben Yair would I gird upon his loins.

Before the altar stood the priests, my brothers the sons of my father. They refused to sacrifice the thanksgiving offering to God. "That which you have opened your mouth to the Lord, do. Your daughter shall be unto the Lord."

I was like a bereaved bear. Had I my sword upon my loin I would have cut them all to pieces upon the tablets of Gilead. Like a madman I screamed:

"Alas, my daughter! You have brought me very low! Why did you return from the land of Tob, from the king's house? Return at once to your grandfather, and if but a single hair of your head shall fall to the ground, my three hundred soldiers will slaughter all of Mizpah!"

My daughter Anath returned not to the land of Tob. In the house of the judge at Mizpah she sat, and I enclosed myself therein with her. The priests, my brothers the sons of my father, went forth into all the cities of Gilead and spoke of the vow I had broken, saying that after I had opened my mouth unto the Lord, I could not go back, and they warned of a plague which would fall upon all of the house of Machir ben Menashe, the inhabitants of Gilead.

Within the house of the judge were we locked and barricaded, and the words of the priests and the wails of the women licked at us like brush fire. Seven days and seven nights did the priests speak their words to the people, and seven days and seven nights the wails of the keening women ceased not. On the eighth day the priests sounded the rams' horns and decreed a fast upon all Gilead, to stop the plague which was felling victims in Zaretan and Sukkoth and Mahanaim and Jabesh —there was not a house in which there had not been a death. They donned sackcloth and cried out unto the God of Jacob, Joseph, Menashe, and Machir. We heard the priests crying out in a loud voice in the courtyard of the shrine and the people closing in around and around the house of the judge, the stones of which are black iron, gathering and weeping and pleading: "Come out, come Jephthah and do to your daughter that which came forth from your mouth and this plague shall not kill more than the sword of Ammon."

VI

JUDGE for yourselves between the priests of Mizpah, my brothers the sons of my father, and me.

From beyond the thick walls, the walls of the judge's house, rose the voice of the people in its tumult, the priests crying out for a sign or a wonder, that the plague had come to an end. And lo, a messenger came and fell at the feet of the elders, saying that also upon Ramoth-Gilead had the plague descended, and while he spoke came another from Edrei—there was plague in all Edrei, in the fields and in the houses, and it spared not infants nor elders, sheep nor cattle.

And I, Jephthah the Gileadite, who feared neither danger nor foe in the field of battle, from Edom and Arabia and Aram-Naharaim even unto the land of the Hermonites, heard the priests crying out to the people the words which were told to me in my childhood, what Phineas the son of Elazar the priest had spoken in Mizpah, "This day we know that the Lord is in our midst, for you have not committed the treachery which Achan the son of Zerah did commit concerning the consecrated thing, and wrath fell upon all the congregation of Israel."

And all the people cried out until the earth did tremble:

Come out, come out, Jephthah, for you have opened your mouth to the Lord and cannot return!

And suddenly my only child arose, rushed forth to the gate of the house and with the strength of giants unbolted it, all the people retreating before her to the left and to the right, as she drew near the priests standing in the doorway of the shrine, in the dumbstruck silence her voice was heard:

"Do unto me that which came forth from my father's mouth!"

And I, as if my legs were in chains, limped after her, crying out in a great voice:

"Lies have the priests told about me! Lies have the elders told as well! Lies, Anath! If I have vowed like worshippers of Chemosh and Baal-Peor to sacrifice you, may fire come down from the sky and consume Jephthah ben Gilead!"

And in the thin silence was heard only the voice of my daughter:

"Let this thing be done to me, father!"

"It will never happen." I fell at the feet of the elders and priests, my brothers the sons of my father. "Touch not this maiden and do not any-

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thing to her. Jephthah will be the lamb for the sacrifice and through his death the plague will cease. My child, my child Anath! My death shall give you life!"

Judge for yourselves between the priests, the sons of my father, and myself:

"One and twenty years, at the head of my men, I wandered throughout the land of Kedem, and ten years I dwelled in the land of Tob, second to King Rechabel, the father of Attar, my mother. The elders of Gilead, its priests and its scribes, my brothers the sons of my father, beseeched me, saying 'We have come unto you now when we are in distress. Fight against the children of Ammon, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.' At the head of my three hundred troops and the men of Gilead and the army of Tob I smote the sons of Ammon, twenty cities, a mighty blow, until they surrendered to me. And if this is the curse on me from your hands, my brothers the sons of my father, by God, the Lord of Hosts, I shall command my men to do unto those seeking the life of my only child what Gideon's three hundred men did unto the leaders of Sukkoth and its elders, trample your flesh upon the thorns of the wilderness and briers, and return with my only child, Anath, to the land of Tob."

I drew not my sword forth from its scabbard. Anath came between me and the priests and said twice and thrice:

"Let this thing be done unto me, father. Let me alone two months, that I may go and bewail my virginity, I and my companions! You are a judge in Israel, Jephthah ben Gilead ben Yair ben Machir! Jephthah shall not rebel against the priests of Mizpah to save the life of his daughter, and allow all the men of Gilead he had rescued from the hand of Ammon to perish in the plague."

The light of my soul, she alone was against me. Her words struck me dumb. Like a pillar of salt I stood as Anath strode into the house of God, to the monument. Like a drunk I staggered, and like a blind man I felt my way to the house of the judge. On that day I closed behind me the gates of my house and never went forth again. Hope continued to flicker like a candle for two months more in my dying soul. "When she returns from the mountain and the priests prepare to sacrifice her, perhaps this time again the angel of God will call out from the heavens, saying, 'Lay not your hand upon the girl.' Perhaps God was but tempting me as He tempted Abraham."

No miracle happened. On that terrible day, when the priests did to my child that which they said I had vowed to the Lord of Hosts, I became sick to death. In the Book it is written: "And Jephthah judged Israel six years." They wrote lies, my brothers the sons of my father, lies! Six years my body lived after Anath, but when my nostrils caught the rising scent of the burning flesh of my only child, my soul died, and my body alone lived for six more long and empty years. I judged not Israel, nor went I ever forth from my door again. Like Samson after his locks were shorn was I. Like Saul after Samuel had rejected him and the spirit of the Lord had gone from him was I.

VII

A HUNDRED generations have passed since then. And all the judges who judged Israel, and all the kings of Judah and Israel, and the priests, and the scribes, all of us have returned to dust. My flesh has returned to dust. Only that lives which is in the Book of Books, the treasure house of the people. One generation passes and another generation comes, and when a new generation touches that which is inscribed in the Book, the dead of the generations which have passed awaken to life. Not in the image of his flesh does the dead man return and live, but as he is described in the Book. Only that which the scribes have set forth upon the parchment with a man's pen will live for generations to come. Flesh and blood are not the soul, the Book is the soul everlasting. Noah and Abraham and Jacob and Joseph and Menashe and Machir were all whatever was told unto Jephthah the child by the scribes, the brothers of his father Gilead, in the house of God at Mizpah. Noah is Noah in the Book. Moses is Moses in the Book, there is none other. Joshua is Joshua in the Book. Samuel is Samuel in the Book.

And Jephthah? Driftwood! Jephthah in his generation like Samuel in his generation? What do you know, a hundred generations after death came to me in the darkness of the judge's house at Mizpah, about Jephthah, about his generation, about what the elders plotted and the priests did and the scribes wrote for generations to come?

Judge for yourselves between me and my brothers the sons of my father, if I bear false witness against them today.

When they came to me in the land of Tob, only the fear of the sons of Ammon moved them, but their fear extinguished not their hatred of me, and it waxed greater when I delivered the sons of Ammon to the Israelites. Not in a day or a week or a month would they have aroused Gilead and Israel against Jephthah. Only the light of my life, when she returned before me from the land of Tob, did bring me low. They burned her flesh in the priestly fire, my brothers the sons of my father, and my soul was consumed on her altar. On the day he returned from his salvation of Gilead was Jephthah's life annihilated in the pit, and its darkening was eternal.

These are the things done to Jephthah by the elders and the priests in his generation. But the scribes, my brothers the sons of my father, a hundred times, generation after generation, have dragged my corpse through the dust, a hundred times have they killed my soul anew. The life which the priests snuffed out was merely the life

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of the flesh. And yet throughout all the days that books abound in the land will the dead live who are in books. With the eyes of the spirit each generation will watch the soul blossom within the dead men in the Book and they shall live once more. The daughter of Jephthah is alive today, pure and innocent, as she was a hundred generations ago.

And Jephthah?

Again and again a hundred generations raise from the dead the Jephthah invented by the scribes, my brothers the sons of my father. It is he who is brought alive generation after generation, and it is he whom they murder a hundred times, a hundred generations. Six years was I shut within the judge's house at Mizpah, I went not forth to war upon the enemies of Gilead nor did I judge Israel. As they had done when my father Gilead fell, the elders of Gilead took unto themselves the fields of Gilead and their vineyards and their good olives. And when the sons of Ephraim who dwelled within Menashe decided to shake off the yoke of Gilead from their backs and to cross the Jordan, they were slaughtered upon the passes across the Jordan.

The scribes have dealt falsely with me. My hand spilled not the blood of Ephraim, Menasheh's brother. Within the judge's house at Mizpah, six years in darkness, I lamented my only child, my Anath, and beseeched my soul to die. Every day, morning, noon, and night my brothers the sons of my father drove stakes into my heart. Beyond the black walls sounded the trumpets of those who went forth to battle and the groans of those who returned from it, the rejoicing of the victorious and the keening of the mourners, and one day I heard beyond my walls a chorus of the children of Mizpah singing out gaily:

"Jephthah's mother wuzza whore, Jephthah's mudda wazza WHORE, Jephthah, Jephthah, bastard, bastard. . . ."

I was like a madman. I shot forth my hand into the darkness, and the sword of Yair ben Machir found I not. To Chimham the son of Barzilai had I given it on that accursed day, upon the threshold of the house of God. Like a blind man I arose to go forth into the square before my house and I almost cursed those who mocked me and my mother Attar, daughter of Rechabel king of the land of Tob, just as Elisha cursed the youths who cried after him: "Go up, bald man." The stakes pierced my heart like the stakes Joab thrust through the heart of Absalom while he yet lived. Day after day. This alone consoled me: on the day I am gathered unto my father, the hatred of my brothers the sons of my father, the priests and elders of Gilead, will be extinguished. For Israel will remember, from generation to generation, that it was Jephthah who saved Gilead from the hand of the children of Ammon, and those who sacrificed his daughter Anath, and those who profaned his name and the name of his mother Attar, daughter of the king of Tob, will be an abomination for eternity. The judgment of the generation will be a true judgment.

On that night, six years after the priests had burned my only child, my flesh died too. I was gathered to my fathers.

And it had not occurred to me that it was not the priests but the scribes who were my murderers for all eternity, time after time, generation after generation.

Rotten timber?

Daughter-slayer?

Son of a whore?

Judge for yourselves.

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Vietnam: How We Deceived Ourselves

Doan Van Toai

On May 11, 1978, I took a bus to the airport for the weekly 5 P.M. Air France refugee flight from Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon) to Paris. In the same sports bag that had accompanied me on the last plane from Qui Nhon to Saigon three years earlier, just before Saigon fell, I packed underwear, some family picture albums, and a pair of socks; from the side flap my tennis racket stuck out. I also carried a small cylindrical aspirin tube wrapped in plastic and inserted deep into my rectum. Inside was a tightly rolled-up United States hundred-dollar bill that I had bought on the black market, and several closely written sheets of paper on which I had recorded the Declaration of Human Rights drawn up by my former cellmate, the heroic lawyer, Tran Danh San.

Inside the terminal building I joined a long line of people waiting to be processed. With mounting apprehension I saw as I drew closer to the front that the guards were inspecting each person and each article of clothing meticulously. They felt along the seams of shirts, searching for items that might be sewn into cuffs or collars. They made people open their mouths so they could check inside. "Anything to declare?" they asked threateningly. "Any lies and you won't leave, now or ever!"

With each person they took five to ten minutes, looking carefully at their papers and asking questions. By the time my turn came, I had calmed myself enough to put on a show of innocence and nonchalance. I was not immediately concerned about the aspirin tube; they were obviously not doing routine body searches. But I was shaking inside about what they might find in my papers, all of which were proper except for the Ho Chi Minh City residence permit with its order to return to my wife's native village.

When they took my documents away, obviously for a closer look, I almost fainted. As far as I could see, they had not done that to anyone else. But the fright passed when after a time they brought them back and resumed the questioning: "Anything to declare? The truth! Dollars? Gold?"

"Absolutely not! Go ahead and search."

They did, but cursorily. And then I was through.

At Ton San Nhut Airport we waited for hours, repeatedly glancing out the window for signs of the Air France jet that would take us out. Finally, at four in the afternoon, the room filled with excitement as the giant plane taxied into sight. A short while later the French pilots walked through the waiting room and were immediately accosted by people asking them about the departure—people who in fact simply could not control their urgent desire to talk to a foreigner, to some personal symbol of life outside. Their enthusiasm, however, was cut off sharply by a guard's curt command: "Hey! You! No talking! Just sit down!" The waiting room was still Vietnamese territory, and no breach of discipline would be tolerated regardless of the fact that in another hour the passengers would be talking about anything in the world they wanted to talk about.

This last reminder of the giant prison camp Vietnam had become faded quickly as we boarded the plane and took our seats. Then the engines built to a rumbling crescendo, and we were racing down the runway, the airport buildings flashing past outside the window. As the jet lifted off the ground, a tumultuous round of applause swept through the plane, a spontaneous outburst of relief and joy that we, the fortunate, had broken free at last.

But I for one did not join the applause, thinking to myself, "Just because we've left Saigon doesn't mean we've landed in Paris." It wasn't until some time later that I began to feel safe—after the captain's deep voice had come over the public-address system, announcing in French: "Ladies and gentlemen, we have now left the airspace of Vietnam. Congratulations on your new freedom!" Early the following morning we arrived at Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris.

The next few days I spent meeting with political leaders and student activists in France's large Vietnamese community. The émi-

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Doan Van Toai was a member of the student opposition to the Thieu regime in South Vietnam and a supporter of the National Liberation Front during the Vietnam war. After the fall of Saigon in 1975 he served briefly in the Provisional Revolutionary Government before being suddenly arrested and held in prison for 28 months without charge. He was released in November 1977 and was later allowed to leave the country. The present essay will appear in somewhat different form in *The Vietnamese Gulag* by Doan Van Toai and David Chanoff, to be published in late March by Simon and Schuster. The two are also the authors of *A Vietcong Memoir* (with Truong Nhu Tang).

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grés had supported the Vietminh against the French and the Vietcong against the Americans. They had provided money and supplies, and had agitated vigorously for an end to both conflicts. Over the period of two wars they had played the same role in France as the antiwar movement in the U.S. did during the latter years of American involvement.

These people were the audience I wanted. It was their passion and commitment, and that of others who believed as they did, that had clarified and focused for the outside world the issues of Vietnam's struggle for independence. And it was their efforts that had been so callously manipulated and betrayed by the revolution.

But for the most part, I was greeted with confused embarrassment. These people had cheered the revolutionary victory, and now they were doing their best to believe that under the new order the nation was prospering. During the war I had been one of them, but now I brought unpalatable news. Even the few Buddhist monks and antiwar people who had begun to understand the nature of the new order were dispirited and tired, unable to think about the implications of what had happened.

Finally the Que Me (Homeland) group, previously an antiwar organization, now increasingly concerned with human rights, heard that I was in Paris and worked hard to give me a forum. A press conference was set up for May 30, 1978, to which they invited all the leading French newspapers and a group of East European dissidents and human-rights activists.

We rented for the conference the same hotel at which Nguyen Thi Binh, the National Liberation Front's Foreign Minister,* had given her famous press conferences during the Paris negotiations. To our relief and surprise the room that morning was as crowded as it had ever been for Binh. The entire French press, radio, and television seemed to be there. They listened intently both to my long statement describing the betrayal by the Communists of everything we Vietnamese had been fighting for, and to my recitation of Tran Danh San's Declaration of Human Rights. Then they asked question after question. The next morning, the facts of the Gulag into which Vietnam had been turned by the Communists were on the front pages of *Le Monde* and many other papers of both the Left and Right.

Coverage, as always, attracted more coverage. Conferences and interviews followed one another —the *Observer*, the BBC, *L'Express*, even *Newsweek*—and I was invited on a speaking tour by the various Vietnamese organizations in France, Germany, Holland, and Belgium. At first I was surprised by the size and intensity of these audiences, then I realized the reason for all the agitation. Fate had made me the first articulate messenger from the new order, and one, moreover, who had experienced its workings on his own flesh.

For thirty years the motivating passion of the Vietnamese people had been to free themselves from a shameful colonial heritage. Against the French, the issues had been clear and morally certain. Against the Americans and their protégés, they had been less so. But to my generation, at least to those who had not seen life in the post-Geneva "democratic" North, the outlines of the issues had remained the same. We saw ourselves as part of a heroic struggle to assert our Vietnamese identity against the backdrop of a century of Western domination.

But shortly after the complete victory of that struggle in 1975, the Vietnamese in Europe began to receive intimations that the promise of a new flourishing of Vietnamese life had been built on lies. People had discounted the stories of those Vietnamese who had fled in 1975 when South Vietnam fell (much as I had discounted the reports of Catholics who had fled south in 1954 after the Geneva agreement which divided the country into North and South Vietnam). And they tried hard to avoid believing the scattered and incomplete reports from refugees who had begun to escape by boat after the new order had established its apparatus. But now the French papers were headlining news about the hard-labor camps and prisons, and about rule by starvation and blackmail, and the Vietnamese in France found it impossible any longer to avert their eyes.

The understanding hit them that what they had believed was a heroic struggle for independence, on the same order as the historic struggles against the Chinese, had been manipulated from the start by the architects of an insidious inhumanity, far worse than that of the foreign oppressors on whom they had poured their hatred. At each of these meetings I shared my perception that we—those of us who had supported the cause—had been condemned to contribute to the tragedy. And now we were condemned to recognize and bear witness to the nation's fate. We (that is, the Vietnamese people) had fought magnificently against our outside enemies, but we had been powerless to protect ourselves from the enemy within.

FROM the *Newsweek* interview and other reports, the story of the Vietnamese Gulag made its way to the United States. I exchanged letters with my old friend Jerry Tinker, for whom I had worked as a student interviewer back in 1966 and 1967 when he came to Saigon as part of a student research project initiated by Senator Edward Kennedy. He wrote that he was now an assistant to Senator Kennedy. He had read one of the articles and was happy to learn that I had gotten out. From the United States too came invitations to speak at meetings sponsored by various Vietnamese refugee associations and by American colleges and universities, Harvard University Law School among them.

* Technically the Foreign Minister of the Provisional Revolutionary Government.

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In the late fall of 1978, I left France for America. I spent two months in Canada talking about Vietnamese human-rights issues, then I traveled to the United States. Everywhere I went, the story was covered in newspaper articles and interviews. Following the Harvard speech, I was invited to address the National Press Club in Washington. There, sharing the dais with me, was the Buddhist philosopher and translator, Nguyen Huu Hieu, whom I had first met when he was a fellow prisoner in the sinister section of Le Van Duyet prison known as Zone C. Hieu too had been released and had escaped Vietnam by boat at about the same time I left.

After an enthusiastic reception from the Press Club audience we flew together from Washington to California. I had been invited to speak at Berkeley, where I had also spoken seven years earlier, though this time my lecture was to be sponsored by the Institute for East Asian Studies, rather than an antiwar group.

In San Francisco I met Nguyen Cong Hoan, the Buddhist opposition Assemblyman under Thieu. The news of his escape from Vietnam in 1977 had sparked hope among us prisoners who thought Hoan's message to the West would focus international opprobrium on Vietnam and force improved conditions in the prisons and labor camps. That hope had died quickly when after a month or two nothing further had been heard of Hoan or his quest.

Hoan and I had known each other slightly during the student movement days of the late 60's when the Buddhist student groups had often cooperated closely with the student union in organizing demonstrations, marches, and sit-ins. Now we felt something like a sense of shared destiny. Chosen as one of the southern delegates to the 1976 Unified Assembly in Hanoi, he had grown disgusted by the rubber-stamp conformity demanded of representatives in Hanoi. In the Saigon Assembly, he said, at least you could speak your mind and represent your people—if you were willing to stand up to the intimidation and abuse. But in Hanoi you were simply an automaton whose presence and vote were required to stage the show of unanimity ordered by the party.

Unable to stomach the hypocrisy, and sickened by his insider's knowledge of the party's policies of revenge and brutal social reorganization, he had fled in a fishing boat from his coastal province of Phu Yen. Making his way to Japan, he gave a press conference that attracted international coverage, then was invited to Washington to testify before a congressional committee investigating human rights in Vietnam. For that testimony the Hanoi authorities had sentenced him to death in absentia.

Like the prisoners, he had believed that the West must be told about the monumental deception being carried out by the Communist regime. Specifically, the Western antiwar movement with all its energy and commitment to the cause of Vietnamese freedom must be educated to what was really taking place. Once they knew, he had thought, they would begin pressuring Vietnam's leaders back inside the pale of human conduct.

Hoan smiled wanly as he told me this. "Believe me," he said, "you will get nowhere substantial with these people. Vietnam to them was a fad, or something they did out of anger at their own government. Now they don't care, I doubt if they ever did. It's not their fight."*

As if to reinforce Hoan's remarks, my reception at Berkeley, while not unfriendly, was a good deal cooler than it had been in 1970 when, as a delegate from the Vietnamese student opposition, I was shouting about self-determination and getting the United States out of the war.

Nevertheless, at Berkeley I had one of those chance encounters that have important consequences. In the audience was a representative of Amnesty International who was a friend of the singer Joan Baez, formerly a leading antiwar figure. Through this woman a luncheon meeting was arranged for Hieu, myself, and Baez. We discussed the prison and camp conditions in Vietnam, and Hieu and I described the system of oppression that had settled onto the nation's people. As we parted, I told her, "If your cause was the suffering of the Vietnamese people, then that is still your cause."

I did not yet know whether Hoan's perception of the antiwar movement was generally accurate, but as a consequence of our discussion, Baez at least began a more thorough investigation of the Vietnamese human-rights record, an issue most Americans were happy to ignore.

Finally, Baez wrote an open letter to the New York *Times* (May 30, 1979) addressed to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and signed by 78 other former antiwar activists. It read in part:

> We appeal to you to end the imprisonment and torture—to allow an international team of neutral observers to inspect your prisons and re-education centers.
>
> We urge you to follow the tenets of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights which, as a member of the United Nations, your country is pledged to uphold.
>
> We urge you to reaffirm your stated commitment to the principles of freedom and human dignity . . . to establish real peace in Vietnam.

For her efforts, Baez was attacked by Jane Fonda in a letter circulated among a large number of former antiwar movement people. She was also excoriated in an open letter entitled "The Truth About Vietnam" (New York *Times*, June

* Nguyen Cong Hoan's personal crusade, however, was not entirely unsuccessful. Shortly after I met him he was invited to Holland to address the Dutch parliament. Following his speech, Holland withdrew its aid to Vietnam over the regime's violations of basic human rights.

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24, 1979) and signed by another group of antiwar people who "recognize and acknowledge the remarkable spirit of moderation, restraint, and clemency with which the reeducation program was conducted." This letter continued:

> Vietnam now enjoys human rights as it has never known in history as described in the International Covenant on Human Rights: the right to a job and safe, healthy working conditions, the right to join trade unions, the right to be free from hunger, from colonialism and racism. Moreover, they receive—without cost—education, medicine, and health care, human rights we in the United States have yet to achieve.

When I saw this letter some months later, I was especially taken by the absolute conviction of the writers, although to my knowledge none of them had ever seen the inside of a Vietnamese reeducation camp or prison, and none had ever experienced the "free health care" or the "right to be free from hunger" guaranteed by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Even more striking in the letter was the burning hatred the signers evinced for their own government. And it was this emotion, still red-hot six years after the 1973 pullout of American troops from Vietnam, that got me to thinking about the psychological consequences of Vietnam for future "nationalistic" conflicts. The letter combined an utterly simplistic understanding of Vietnamese issues with a deep antagonism toward American motives—obviously a potent mixture. I wondered how pervasive that orientation was in American public opinion and whether it would permanently debilitate United States policy toward Vietnam.

I CAME back to France overflowing with images of the United States. My chief impression was of the country's vitality and intellectual excitement. I had spent months talking with specialists on Vietnam, former antiwar people, and thousands of students who wanted to know what had happened, and what was happening now. (Vietnam was front-page news again with its invasion of Cambodia.) I also found that the experiences I had had on the tour had pushed my own thinking in new directions.

It was not that my personal shock at the revolution's betrayal had worn off; it never would. But I now began to understand that the plain fact of the betrayal was less important than the method of the betrayal, which had been the single most potent weapon in the arsenal of the Vietnamese Communist party.* My trip to the United States had helped me to distance myself from the personal dimension of the tragedy. And it helped me toward an understanding of the more global significance of what had happened.

Motivated by my hatred of the dictators and by my view of myself as a Vietnamese nationalist, I had played a role in weakening the American-backed regime and isolating it from domestic and international support. Now I understood that the passion of my ideals, combined with a belief in my own political intelligence, had led me down a trail at whose unforeseen end lay terror and destitution for my country. And I had walked that trail in company with millions of other passionate idealists, Vietnamese, French, and American.

Together we had been caught in a "people's war," the kind of struggle that gave precedence to the techniques of psychological warfare. As the American military had belatedly recognized, the battlefield was also the minds and hearts of those who created public opinion in Vietnam and in the West. And the way to those minds and hearts, the Communists saw, was through their ideals: a hatred for colonialism, an abhorrence of violence, a belief in social welfare and liberal democracy.

That was why, from the beginning, the Vietnamese Communist party had built its strategy, not on the forthright social promises of Marxism (the rock upon which the Russian and Chinese parties had built their revolutions), but on the Vietnamese people's fierce desire for national independence. That was why in two wars the Vietnamese Communist party had hidden itself in the background and created in its place two "fronts," the Vietminh and the NLF, whose appeal was to the grass-roots longings of the Vietnamese—and to the ingrained ideals of the very Western nations that were the party's bitterest enemies. (In 1945 Ho Chi Minh had proclaimed the independence of the Vietnamese people in the following words: "We hold the truths that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.")

All of us, Vietnamese and Americans alike, could see the venal habits, political suppression, and common brutality of the Saigon regime, along with the war's human carnage and the grotesque social impact of the American army. But the heart of the other side remained hidden. Neither young nationalists like me in South Vietnam nor most Americans reading their newspapers and watching television could see the secret strategy that made the American people themselves the chief target of this "people's war" or the iron social theories and alien disregard for human decency that animated those whose target they were.

I now realized that Vietnam was not an isolated incident on the stage of world affairs, that the "people's war" techniques that had been developed there were applicable to every Third World conflict in which the West had an interest. Vietnam was a casebook for revolutionary strategy—a casebook to be studied with the greatest care by the world's democracies and by the world's emerging nations, for whom the Communist road to national liberation is in fact a road to national desolation.

* During the war years the official name of the party was the Dang Lao Dong, the Workers' party.

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Back to Criminal Psychology

Joseph Adelson

SEEING on my desk a copy of *Crime and Human Nature* by James Q. Wilson and Richard J. Herrnstein,* a colleague asked if that was the book arguing that "crime is biological." It does not, but it is easy to see how and why he came to think so. A front-page feature story about the book in a local newspaper carried the headline: "Do Genes Cause Crime?" The Phil Donahue show discussing it began with blowups of the three major body types, with much of the program centering on the contribution of physique to criminal behavior. In another newspaper story, a civil-rights leader describes the work as "racist trash."

Needless to say, *Crime and Human Nature* is not racist. But neither is it biological in emphasis, nor does it for that matter argue for any specific approach to the understanding of crime. A glance at the Table of Contents tells us that only a small portion treats the biological evidence—truth to tell, there really is not that much to treat, it having been a taboo topic in criminology until very recently. The greater part of the text considers social, economic, and cultural studies: there are chapters on the family, the community, labor markets, the mass media, historical changes, and so on. Nor is the book a brief, in the sense of marshaling its evidence toward a given conclusion. To the contrary, we sense throughout a stubborn determination to examine scrupulously all important lines of evidence and theory. The tone is Apollonian, avoiding "brilliance," easy arguments, facile conclusions. It has received its most generous praise from insiders, who are quick to appreciate its graceful mastery of a vast, difficult, often chaotic body of knowledge.

The publicity given to the book's putative biologism, and its equally putative neoconservatism, has kept attention away from what is genuinely distinctive in its approach —a consistent, systematic emphasis on the motives of the criminal offender, on his personality, and on the origins of both in the family. Why are some persons more disposed—drawn? driven?—to crime than others? It is a question Wilson and Herrnstein are always prepared to consider, even when discussing matters seemingly remote from issues of motivation and personality. Still, one may wonder why asking that question persistently makes this book distinctive. We would expect it to be one of the two or three central questions of criminology. In fact, it is not. Although psychological studies do not suffer quite the pariah status of biological or genetic approaches to crime, they are nevertheless seen as secondary, even infra dig. The result has been serious imbalances and distortions in our grasp of crime.

Through a curious division of intellectual labor, criminology has for many years been a territory occupied largely by sociology and such immediate neighbors as social work. Most textbooks are written by sociologists; at most universities courses are taught in that department, and the major research studies have been done by scholars trained in that discipline. At the same time, psychology—ordinarily a sort of PacMan of the social sciences, that is, busy, ambitious, imperial, eager to gobble up all the subject matter in sight—has remained strangely diffident. My own department, which offers hundreds of courses, some of them on arcane topics, does not list a single class on crime or delinquency, nor does it provide clinical or formal research training in the area. The abnormal-psychology textbook I use, which is typical in this respect, has two chapters on schizophrenia and one-third of a chapter on the antisocial personality—not an unfair proportion in view of the relative quantity of information at hand. Every now and again a psychologist or psychiatrist will amble into the territory, led there by accident or idiosyncrasy, but while he may produce interesting or even brilliant individual work, that will not itself tend toward a tradition of inquiry. Hence, psychological writing on crime has until recently focused upon special problems, e.g., such forensic issues as the nature of legal insanity, or on special cases, e.g., bizarre or exotic criminal careers. And that, paradoxically, has strengthened the existing view that psychology has little to say either about crime generically or about the dynamics of "ordinary" crime, which remain the province of sociology.

This view has penetrated the consciousness of educated citizens and is now a shibboleth, which we hear in the nearly reflexive statement that the origins of crime are "social." Undergraduates will tell you so quite firmly, and so for that matter will mental-health practitioners. It is not unusual to hear psychologists or psychiatrists, in the course of talking about an especially aberrant act of crime, pause to exclude ordinary crime from the realm of psychopathology, offering a pious reminder that the average offender is a victim of poverty or

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* Simon and Schuster, 639 pp., $22.95.

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economic inequality, or the frustrations stemming therefrom.

There is something odd about this insistence. If someone uses a gun to shoot himself, it is an event explained variously by such concepts as narcissistic injury, or the presence of hostile introjects, or low levels of the chemical 5HIAA. If someone uses a gun to shoot someone else in the course of a robbery, it is an event explained by the unemployment rate. Yet that latter idea, even in its more sophisticated versions, will not resist the simplest probing: e.g., crime rates will often rise during periods of prosperity; most poor people do not turn to crime; in some instances the most impoverished groups in a community have the lowest crime rates. These are among the cogent examples given by Wilson and Herrnstein, whose learned and complex analysis of the etiology of crime should once and for all free us from a monotonic sociologism. Still, one never can tell; something more than simple-mindedness may be at work.

Despite their continuing popularity in the public mind, and among many intellectuals, psychological modes of analysis have been in disfavor not only in the academic study of crime but throughout much of social science. The concept of personality itself has been steadily, successfully devalued during the last two decades, astonishingly enough by psychologists specializing in the study of personality. A recent president of the major scholarly society devoted to the topic made his reputation by debunking personality as an important determinant of behavior. For a number of years, the most prestigious journal in the field published only a handful of papers on personality, devoting most of its pages to social psychology. A prevailing doctrine in personality theory, likely the most influential, holds our behavior to be determined not by what lies within us, by traits or needs or will, but by what situations call out in us, that is, by "reality," as it is or as we understand it to be.

A celebrated study in abnormal psychology—it is said to be the most widely reprinted article in the field—illustrates the general approach. A normal person is secretly admitted into a mental hospital as a psychiatric patient, and, carrying that designation, is treated as such by the staff, although he behaves "normally," that is, non-psychotically. One is to be led to the inference that we are "mad" only largely because we are so seen, madness being less an intrinsic than an attributed state. It is only one of a much larger number of experiments where the pressures of the situation are shown to overwhelm human disposition. We see what we expect to see, or are told to see; we do what the situation requires us to; we are or become what is imputed to us to be or become.

In the face of this onslaught, the study of the person did not disappear, not quite, but it did diminish visibly in range, energy, and confidence. The description and measurement of personality, once a lively and at times stormy topic, fell into a kind of lassitude. It became the conventional (and erroneous) wisdom that the projective tests were not to be trusted; they were given up as research instruments, and to some degree in clinical assessment as well. It was argued in many quarters that there was little demonstrable consistency to the personality, that someone at forty was likely to be entirely different from the same person at thirty or fifty; so even if one could measure the person accurately—and was that not in question?—one might well be measuring a will-o'-the-wisp. These doubts grew, came together, reinforced one another. Personality psychology was enfeebled. Much of its subject matter was taken over by neighboring approaches, by the newly ascendant cognitive psychology, to a lesser degree by physiological approaches, and above all by social psychology.

Why did it happen so easily, and why did it happen when it did? To begin with, the deep and careful scrutiny of the person had never come easily to American academic psychology. It was initially a European import, and one that did not quite take, unlike so many others. The American tendency has been Lockean, at home with an idea of the person as empty and infinitely open to experience. The flight from the study of personality may also reflect that flight from fixed identity which surfaced in American life about two decades ago, expressing itself in such phenomena as transsexual surgery and androgynous dress and manners. Above all, the decline of personality study probably reflects the aversion against "labeling" or "stigma" or "blaming the victim" which has so dominated writing on social issues in recent years. Those deviant were not to be seen as deviant intrinsically, or immutably, or through apparent deficiencies of will, temperament, or ability. They were to be understood entirely as creatures of circumstance, or as targets of false attribution. One finds it hard to believe that social science has ever been much given to "blaming the victim"—its besetting sins being, rather, irrelevance and abstractness—yet the fear of doing so, or even seeming to do so, kept it from giving due attention to the structure and dynamics of the personality.

What began as moral generosity—the wish to avoid stigmatizing others—soon developed into fixed habits of thought and then into taboos and superstitions, some of these so clearly at odds with the real world that they were not long sustained. The risks of intellectual dogma are demonstrated quite clearly in the recent history of schizophrenia. For many years, the better scholars of the syndrome understood it to be an extraordinarily complex disorder, multifaceted and with multiple origins, not likely to be solved by a single breakthrough or by a simple intellectual solution. That ambiguity proved difficult to bear, and a fierce factionalism developed. A zealous, reductionistic environmentalism held sway for some time, its rigidities encouraging the growth of an equally zealous, reductionistic biologism—the two camps, strangely enough, fusing their conceptual errors to help bring about the de-

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struction of our mental-hospital system. The environmentalists, suspecting schizophrenia to be caused or encouraged by the custodial conditions designed to treat it, were eager to try "real life" as a cure, while the biologicals believed that they had or would soon invent a magical pill which would rid us of the disorder altogether.

SCHIZOPHRENIA and criminality are by no means parallel cases, yet in both instances scholarly belief has been conditioned by larger currents of ideology. The refusal for so many years to accept a genetic component in the psychoses, despite strong evidence for it, is akin to the de-facto dismissal of psychological variables in the study of crime. *Crime and Human Nature* has an interesting discussion of the fate of a landmark longitudinal study carried out by the pioneering criminologists, Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck. In the late 1930's they initiated a comparison of carefully matched groups of delinquent and non-delinquent youngsters. Their findings are rich and revealing: that signs of a troubled, rebellious personality are generally evident well before adolescence; that the two types of youngsters can be successfully distinguished in blind analyses, through tests of personality, the delinquents being rated as impulsive and resentful, the non-delinquents as overcontrolled and somewhat depressive; and that patterns of discipline are different in the two types of families, the parents of delinquents tending to be, variously, overly severe, or overly lax, or erratic. These studies tell us quite plainly that delinquency enters early and stays late—the follow-up statistics at age thirty-one are especially horrendous, the delinquent group accounting for a truly extraordinary amount of serious crime, a great deal of it violent. About one-third of that sample spent five or more years in jail during the time they were seventeen-to-twenty-five years of age.

The Glueck project had the methodological weaknesses typical of its era, yet these seem not to have been crippling. Later and more carefully controlled work confirmed and in fact extended and deepened the major findings. The findings, showing as they do a strong association among delinquency and personality and family patterns, remind us that sociological and economic variables, although necessary, are not sufficient for an adequate grasp of criminal behavior. Nevertheless, the Gluecks' research has been criticized severely, and underwent a long and—I believe—continuing period of neglect. The dissonance between the data and the prevailing theoretical view was handled, as it so often is, by a condescending dismissal of the research. The topic was dropped, that is, forgotten, set aside, not so much assassinated as sent, in disgrace, into exile.

ONE would like to believe that a banished idea gathers strength in the wilderness and returns toughened and more resourceful. That did not happen here: the early neglect of psychological ideas in the study of crime has produced some continuing weaknesses, which to some degree are hidden from us because of the superb expository skills Wilson and Herrnstein bring to the task. They give us the illusion that we know more than we do. We do not, for example, have an adequate taxonomy of criminal motivations or personality types. We compare offenders and non-offenders, or offenders by frequency of arrest, or by age, or by type of crime committed—all well and good, and often illuminating, but too crude to allow much understanding of individual psychological differences disposing to crime. We work almost exclusively with aggregated data—a sure sign that the research is at an early and underdeveloped stage.

Another limitation stems from the absence of a substantial contribution from psychoanalysis or other psychodynamic schools of thought. These disciplines draw their knowledge largely from individual therapy, meaning those who seek it out voluntarily, hoping to profit from it—neither of which is likely to be true for those criminally inclined. The good patient looks within himself, ready to search out his motives, often in a mood of self-doubt or self-reproach. The criminal personality tends to quick action and unrelenting self-justification.

In the absence of direct clinical data, there has been some effort to extrapolate from observations made elsewhere, often with surprising success. One of the most interesting sections of the Wilson-Herrnstein book discusses the application of "attachment theory," developed from studies of very young children, to the patterns found in delinquent families. It is not hard to think of other possibilities. We can learn a great deal from recent advances in the study of borderline and severely disturbed personalities; and we know a great deal about variations in superego formation and structure, far more than we have yet applied to the nuances of criminal motivation.

SO THE ideas are there, but to exploit them we will first have to give up that resistance to the psychological which seems to possess us when we hear the phrase "social problems." It is becoming clear that we will not be able to think intelligently about such matters as pandemic drug abuse (throughout the society) or poor school achievement (in the middle class as elsewhere) or unmarried teen-age mothers until we understand far more than we now do about motives, incentives, inhibitions, defenses, displacements, controls; and it is also clear that little of the recent writing on these matters offers us a clue. We gaze on the actors from a great distance, sometimes inventing a merely imagined notion of their experience, more often retreating to the current clichés of social science.

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Truffaut & Other Auteurs

Richard Grenier

WHO is the author of a movie? What is an "auteur," anyway? What was in the mind of the late François Truffaut and his friends when they thrust this idea upon the world some thirty years ago? The concept has certainly served its purpose as far as the Truffaut circle is concerned, in that it contributed effectively to establishing its members as France's leading and most talked-about film directors. But the notion, hazily grasped at best in America, has led to something of an auteur cult, which bids fair to be with us for some time.

The French origins of the auteur concept are not lost in the mists of history. It was launched in the 1950's by a film journal, *Cahiers du Cinéma*, to which Truffaut himself contributed, as well as Eric Rohmer, Jean-Luc Godard, Claude Chabrol, and Jacques Rivette—all of them now better known as directors than as critics.

As is clear from a recently published anthology drawn from the early years of the journal,* the opinions of the *Cahiers* critics were rather bizarre. Truffaut considered Nicholas Ray's *Johnny Guitar* with Joan Crawford a "triumph." Anyone who rejects this movie, he wrote in his impassioned style of the period, "will never recognize inspiration, poetic intuition, or . . . an idea, a good film, or even cinema itself." He thought Frank Tashlin's *The Girl Can't Help It* with Jayne Mansfield was "more than a good film, more than a funny film . . . it is a kind of masterpiece of the genre." Of Jean Seberg's performance in Otto Preminger's *Bonjour Tristesse*, Truffaut wrote, "Everything is perfect; this kind of sex appeal hasn't been seen on the screen." And Truffaut's *Cahiers* colleagues had equally curious views.

How could a gang of young Frenchmen with such peculiar tastes launch upon the world such an influential concept? That so many of them shortly became successful film-makers was no doubt the decisive factor. But there was also another factor at work.

France protects artistic achievement as perhaps no other country in the world. By the exercise of the so-called *droit moral* (literally "moral law"), artists of all kinds retain artistic control over the art they produce. An art dealer cannot modify a Picasso he owns in order to increase what he thinks will be its salability—this seems reasonable enough. But a French movie producer can no more alter a film he has financed than an art dealer can alter his Picasso. The producer can distribute the film, exhibit it, perhaps make a fortune from it, but he is powerless to modify it. He can starve his director for cash during the making of the movie. He can threaten never to employ him again. He can shout. He can scream. But even though he owns the film, he cannot tamper with it in any way. The director is the film's creator, its author. The state protects his art as a thing of utmost value. This is no "theory." This is the law.

Indeed, Truffaut and his friends never enunciated any such thing as an "auteur theory." Misunderstandings of the French notion were due in some measure to mistranslation. What the *Cahiers* critics were calling for in plain French was, after all, *une politique des auteurs*, which means "an author policy." As was only reasonable from their national experience, these critics felt that everyone already knew that legally the director was the author of a movie. At least this was known by all Frenchmen—and these were the people they were addressing.

Unfortunately, the *Cahiers* critics claimed, France was cursed with a generation of film-makers who failed to exercise their prerogative as creators of this new art, remaining subservient to the country's literary class. The *Cahiers* group particularly hated both Claude Autant-Lara, who had recently done an excellent film adaptation of Raymond Radiguet's renowned *The Devil in the Flesh*, and Jean Delannoy, who had directed an equally skillful version of André Gide's *Symphonie Pastorale*.

But the group disliked France's reigning quality directors even when they worked from original screenplays. Truffaut proclaimed in a famous 1954 essay, "A Certain Tendency of the French Cinema" (unfortunately not included in the present volume), that French movies were dominated by seven or eight leading screenwriters. And it was these screenwriters, he said, who were the instrument of subservience to the French literary class and its morbid values. The art of the cinema, said Truffaut and the other *Cahiers* critics, lay in the actual filming, not the story—as Hollywood, according to them, knew so well. Hollywood, wrote Eric Rohmer, was to the cinema what Florence was to Italian painting of the Quattrocento.

The *Cahiers* critics were not completely uninformed about the functioning of the classical studio system in Hollywood. They knew, roughly, that a director was handed a screenplay from his studio's story department which he was unable to change substantially. They knew that once he had shot a scene—much of it, in the American style, all the way through from a variety of angles and distances—the whole mass of developed film was then turned over to the studio's editing department and that, for all practical purposes, the director might never see it again.

Knowledge of film theory might have indicated that these new critics should give at least the editor as well as the director credit for the

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* *Cahiers du Cinéma: The 1950's, Neo-Realism, Hollywood, New Wave*, edited by Jim Hillier, Harvard University Press, 320 pp., $22.50.

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"filmic" qualities of the end product, but the *Cahiers* critics were single-minded. Ignoring the editor —who was a subordinate figure in France—they maintained it was the Hollywood director's choice of "shots," his angles, his framing, his lighting, his placing of actors and properties on the set, his ordering of movement, that constituted the essence of film. And if the director (even without the support of a *droit moral*) could impose on these variables his personality, and even better express a world view, he qualified as a true "author." Truffaut, Rohmer, Godard, and the other young *Cahiers* critics complained that most contemporary French directors thought the essence of a movie was the story. The directors were not only wrong, these critics said, they were witlessly forfeiting their opportunity to become masters of a new art.

THE virulence of the *Cahiers* critics' attack on the Paris movie establishment of the time can only be understood as proceeding from a deep-seated cluster of envies. First, as is now widely acknowledged in France, the *Cahiers* critics were all desperate to direct films themselves, and almost any argument that came to hand to discredit their seniors was welcome. Also, as movie addicts since childhood, and actually preferring film to literature, they strongly resented the traditional prestige accorded in France to letters as well as to the other older arts. They wanted film, their favorite art, to have its Tolstoy, its Mozart, its Michelangelo.

Moreover, they were in burning revolt—and this is of extreme importance—not only against the prestige of letters in France but against the prevailing values of fashionable Left Bank literature: its negativism, its pessimism. It is this aspect of *Cahiers* criticism and, later, of the New Wave films the *Cahiers* critics made when they became directors, that has effectively eluded most foreign observers. But Jim Hillier, a British scholar, notes it carefully in an excellent introduction to the *Cahiers* anthology. He quotes an American critic, John Hess, as saying that for the *Cahiers* group an auteur in the last analysis was a film director who expressed an optimistic image of human potentialities: "By reaching out emotionally and spiritually to other human beings and/or to God, one could transcend the isolation imposed on one by a corrupt world."

In his later years Truffaut acknowledged that he and his friends had greatly overplayed the "filmic" side of movie authorship; the story counted a great deal, he admitted. The simple fact was that the *Cahiers* critics actually preferred the hopeful little plots of Hollywood B movies with their scorned happy endings to the *noir, maudit* pessimism so in vogue among French literary intellectuals. Nor was this a case of the high using the low in order to cudgel the middle. Truffaut, for one, was working-class, a high-school dropout with genuinely popular taste, fiercely resentful of the values the high culture wanted to impose on him.

Intermittently, in fact, he said as much, as in "A Certain Tendency of the French Cinema." In a scathing attack on France's two leading screenwriters of the period, Jean Aurenche and Pierre Bost, he heatedly accuses them of introducing "anti-militarist," "anti-bourgeois," and "blasphemous" elements into their adaptation of Radiguet's *The Devil in the Flesh* and cites no fewer than five screenplays in which they are guilty of blasphemy. He accuses another celebrated screenwriter, too, of blasphemy, and charges actor-director Marcello Pagliero—"the Sartre of the cinema" —with using dirty language. He cites with apparent low regard film examples of both homosexuality and "semi-pornography."

Truffaut comes right out with it. Modern literature, he says in strong disapproval, is half-Bovary, half-Kafka. In consequence, "Not a film is shot in France any more in which the authors don't think they're redoing *Madame Bovary*." The dominant characteristic of the period's ruling school of French cinema, he asserts, is its "anti-bourgeois" bias, a bias not shared by France's common people. In time audiences will understand, Truffaut writes in conclusion, that the abject family shown by the French cinema is their family, that the thwarted religion is their religion. They will have little reason to feel gratitude, he says, toward a French cinema which has gone to such pains to show them life "as seen from a fourth-floor apartment overlooking Saint-Germain-des-Près." Truffaut is referring to the residence of Jean-Paul Sartre, notorious for his infatuation with the far Left.

The case could be made that Truffaut was "apolitical," in the sense that he did not wake up every morning worrying about the state of the body politic. He lived for movies. But there are "apolitical" people alienated from their society and others who accord it their unstated but nonetheless powerful allegiance. Given the opinions expressed by Truffaut in the essay quoted above, it was not hard for General de Gaulle or his culture minister, André Malraux, to grasp that France had produced in Truffaut and the *Cahiers* group a school of young film-makers whose conservatism, both cultural and political, was profound. Once de Gaulle returned to power in 1958, Malraux did everything in his power to push them to the fore. Jean-Luc Godard later careered off to the radical Left for some years, but by and large the Gaullists had taken the *Cahiers* group's true measure. During the eight years of France's Algerian war, for example, a national trauma comparable in some ways to America's war in Vietnam, *Cahiers du Cinéma* never published one word against it.

IT WAS not to be expected that an aesthetic doctrine conceived under such special circumstances as the *politique des auteurs* could be exported intact. Yet there is some irony in the fact that Hollywood—a source of such inspiration to a group of young Frenchmen engaged some three decades ago in a populist rebellion against their country's intellectual elite—should have received back in the "auteur theory" a highly elitist doctrine.

For if the circumstances and basic thrust of French auteurism were hardly understood at all in America, the notion that the director of

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a film was a person of enormous importance was grasped quite readily, perhaps a shade too readily.

It was not ever thus. F. Scott Fitzgerald, who did his time in Hollywood, considered directors "glorified cameramen," and James Cagney, who saw them from another angle, called them "pedestrian workmen, mechanics," some of whom "couldn't direct you to a cheap delicatessen."

For the general American public, meanwhile, most film directors had been simply invisible. On January 1, 1940, the New York *Times* reviewed a new movie of Victor Hugo's *Hunchback of Notre Dame*, starring Charles Laughton, without once mentioning the director's name. The director, William Dieterle, was well known, highly paid, and had made any number of major films, including *Juarez*, with Bette Davis and Paul Muni, and *The Life of Emile Zola* and *The Story of Louis Pasteur*, both also with Paul Muni—this in a period when biographical pictures were among Hollywood's most prestigious products. But Dieterle's artistic contribution as director was not considered worth mentioning. It was not, as it were, a "Dieterle" movie, it was a Charles Laughton movie, or perhaps even a Victor Hugo movie.

Giant newspaper advertisements for films in those days rarely featured the name of the director. Well into the 1950's, the reviewers for the New York *Times* often failed to mention the director or cited him in a perfunctory manner, whether he was Raoul Walsh, David Lean, or Akira Kurosawa. As late as the early 1960's when the American director Martin Ritt arrived in France, he was dazzled at the status that being a director gave him there. "In America even a director's *mother* doesn't know what he does for a living," exclaimed the man who was to film *Hud* and *Norma Rae* and had already directed *Edge of the City*. "But here!" he exclaimed. "What a country! Look! My name! *Big print!*"

By the time the new French idea came along, things had changed in Hollywood, of course. The studio system had broken down, and it almost seems Hollywood was positively waiting for auteurism in its American incarnation—which often consisted mainly of surrounding the director with a previously nonexistent nimbus of glory and giving him credit for great powers, some real, some not.

The "auteur theory" arrived, moreover, at a time when the American cinema was vastly increasing its prestige as an art and people wanted to personalize these new artistic achievements, if sometimes speciously, by singling out their creators. Hollywood directors, although they still rarely had the "final cut," had indeed expanded their authority: they usually supervised their film's editing and contributed to many aspects of the film's production from which they had previously been excluded. And now they had this new notion, fresh from France, in accordance with which—as it now came to be said—the movies were truly "a director's medium."

But the new notion produced an unrealistically inflated idea of the director's authority. When Bill Conti, composer of the scores of the *Rocky* series, was called in to do a fresh score for *The Seduction of Joe Tynan*, the first movie written by and starring Alan Alda, he thought he had best deal prudently with the film's director and presumptive auteur, Jerry Schatzberg. What had Schatzberg disliked about the first attempt at a score? he asked. "Oh, I liked it fine," Conti reports the director as saying. "Alan didn't like it." "Then what am I doing talking to you for?" the musician replied somewhat bluntly. "Let me see Alan."

For contrary to the popular understanding of this new "auteur theory"—and it being Hollywood, not Paris—Jerry Schatzberg, the director, was not the lord of all he beheld on the set of *The Seduction of Joe Tynan*. Most of the key decisions were made by Alan Alda. And two years later, when it came time to film the second movie Alda had written, *The Four Seasons*, he significantly decided to carry the process a step further and direct it himself, which he did successfully, a practice he has continued—as in *Sweet Liberty*, soon to be released.

Nowadays, Clint Eastwood also directs most of his own movies. Sylvester Stallone, who recently brought forth *Rocky IV*, took over the direction of the *Rocky* series from the second film on. Two years ago Barbra Streisand directed her own hit movie, *Yentl*. Woody Allen has directed his films for many years, rain or shine, a real auteur. Robert Redford, although he has yet to direct a movie in which he plays the lead, maintains close control when he is simply acting. A screenwriter who wrote one of the recent pictures in which Redford was merely the leading man had little to do with the movie's prospective director while the film was in development. "But I went to see Redford with the new pages every day," he says. A roughly comparable story is told by a screenwriter developing a screenplay for Sean Connery.

The basic pattern is plain. In today's Hollywood, a place of essentially independent productions, the "power player" on a movie set is the person *in whose name the money has been raised*. This is usually a leading actor or actress, who occasionally also directs. It is often a powerful, creative producer. And only now and then is it a glamor director. Hollywood skeptics claim, in fact, that the larger the number of people who recognize the director's name, the greater are a film's chances of failure. Michael Cimino went straight from *The Deerhunter* to *Heaven's Gate*, and Francis Ford Coppola followed *The Godfather* and *Apocalypse Now* with *One From the Heart* and *Rumble Fish*.

Naturally, hundreds of important artistic decisions on a movie are made by people other than the "power player," but many of the most conspicuous things about a film are still decided by the man who "calls the shots," and who that man is to be is sometimes the occasion for fierce struggles. Some months ago an interesting Hollywood battle royal took place between the star Jack Nicholson and Robert Towne, the celebrated

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screenwriter of Roman Polanski's *Chinatown*, now risen to the rank of director and presumably a new auteur. Deep into preparation for the highly touted *The Two Jakes*, sharp differences appeared. Nicholson and Towne fought bitterly. The issues were not resolved. As things now stand, *The Two Jakes* not only has no auteur, but there will be no picture.

IN A knock-down-drag-out battle between a director and a major star, once a film is before the cameras, it is almost always the star who wins. During the much-trumpeted bringing together of Marlon Brando and Jack Nicholson in Arthur Penn's *The Missouri Breaks* some years ago, Brando wanted to play a scene in "drag"—i.e., dressed as a woman. Penn hated the idea. Brando had his way, however. For directors can be dismissed in mid-production. It has happened. But with the movie half-finished, if Marlon Brando had left the film, all his scenes would have needed to be reshot. It would have cost the production millions. This is why high-prestige directors often avoid using stars of the first rank in their pictures. Even celebrated directors know, if it comes to a donnybrook, that they are likely to lose.

Indeed, directors usually lose battles with major stars even when the director is producing the movie himself. There must have been moments when Francis Ford Coppola cursed the day he ever cast the notorious Marlon Brando in what amounted to little more than a cameo role as Colonel Kurtz in his *Apocalypse Now*. There they sat, wet, marooned in the jungles of the Philippines, wiped out once already by a typhoon, down millions and millions of dollars, but if Brando didn't like the way Coppola was planning to do a scene, he'd sulk in his tent. And, say what you will about Hollywood, it is hard to cut Mr. Kurtz out of even a loose adaptation of *Heart of Darkness*.

All of which has led much of Hollywood to feel that these days American directors—reversing their historical obscurity—are often credited with powers they simply do not possess and that all the attention paid them in the press and in film schools has given the public an exaggerated notion of their control over the finished product.

CRITICS of the director-as-auteur principle fall into different schools, of which screenwriters—once called by a studio wag "a necessary evil"—are probably the most vociferous. "In the beginning was the word!" they go about crying, although they also tell stories making fun of themselves, such as the joke about the new actress so ignorant in the ways of Hollywood that, wanting a role in a new movie, she slept with the writer. Film writers won a prestige victory some years ago, however, when *Time* magazine, at the head of each movie review, began listing first the director and then the screenwriter, almost as co-authors.

There is merit in this approach, as some of the most distinguished and harmonious films in cinema history have been made by writer-director teams. All the great Vittorio de Sica films at the height of Italy's post-World War II neorealism were scripted by the Italian novelist Cesare Zavattini, and all the imposing run of Marcel Carné films in the late 1930's and 1940's (*Quai des Brumes, Le Jour se Lève, Children of Paradise*) were scripted by the French poet Jacques Prévert. De Sica before and after Zavattini, and Carné before and after Prévert, were simply not the same.

The writers' case in its fully developed form holds that John Ford's *The Grapes of Wrath* and Howard Hawks's *Of Mice and Men*—movies by two different directors but both based on works by John Steinbeck—have more in common than *The Grapes of Wrath* and some other film by John Ford, say, *The Quiet Man*. This position—absolute heresy for a pure auteurist—is far from absurd, and the history of sound cinema over the more than four decades since *The Grapes of Wrath* is strewn with persuasive examples.

The director-writer rivalry is agreeably absent, of course, in the case of such directors as Federico Fellini and Ingmar Bergman, who either script or co-script all their own screenplays, thereby attaining an uncommon degree of artistic unity. A younger member of this privileged group is Hungary's Istvan Szabo (*Mephisto; Colonel Redl*), who, a director-writer himself, astonished readers of the New York *Times* during the recent New York Film Festival by his blatantly pro-writer stance. There's nothing a director needs to know about moviemaking, he said in an interview, "that couldn't be learned by an intelligent high-school graduate in two weeks." Really to shape a film, he felt, it was absolutely necessary for a director either to write or to co-write the screenplay himself.

Unfortunately it is not every director who, like Fellini, Bergman, or Szabo, has the talent required to write his own screenplays. One of the most pernicious effects of the misinterpreted French "auteur theory" in America has been that it has given certain highly praised directors such as Francis Ford Coppola and Michael Cimino, cited earlier—both possessors of dazzling directorial skills—the notion that, since directing was all that really counted, they could trust themselves to carry out such a subsidiary activity as writing the story. Curiously enough, both Coppola and Cimino have delivered workmanlike screenplays when writing under other people's direction, but when they turn to writing scripts for their own films they are seized by a certain hysteria, a kind of *folie des grandeurs*.

They would do well to take a page from the book of one of France's leading directors, Louis Malle, now mainly resident in the United States. Although Malle has not had the best of luck in choosing American stories, he is the first to admit that two of his greatest French films, *Le Feu Follet* ("The Fire Within") and *Lacombe Lucien*, owe much of their excellence to the quality of the writing. *Le Feu Follet* is based very closely on a French novel of the same name by Drieu la Rochelle, who (although a fascist) was a quite brilliant writer. *Lacombe Lucien* was written expressly for Malle by a perhaps

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equally brilliant young French novelist named Patrick Modiano. But this "splitting of the credit" runs counter to certain Hollywood directors' urge to increase their personal glory—to which American critics have accommodated themselves. Sydney Pollack, a highly skilled director of films as varied as *Tootsie* and the new *Out of Africa*, but who regularly subordinates himself to his "material," is simply not as glamorous to today's critics as Francis Ford Coppola with all his fiascos.

But writers are not the only ones cast in the shadow by the director cult. The film editor, now virtually the forgotten man of film-making, has declined greatly in public awareness since his glory days in the Soviet Union when Sergei Eisenstein declared that editing—more than story and even shooting—was the true heart of cinema. Since a movie's editor is the artisan whose work is most difficult to distinguish from that of the director himself, "an inevitable tension infects the director-editor relationship," writes Ralph Rosenblum, editor of Woody Allen's *Annie Hall* and many other major films. "Directors never give special mention to their editors when they lope up to receive their Oscar," he writes in his excellent book on editing,* "lest an overeager critic surmise that the film has been in trouble and was saved by heavy editorial doctoring."

Another distinguished editor, Tom Priestly (*This Sporting Life*; *Marat/Sade*; *Deliverance*), says: "We editors know that we cannot really judge each other's work without knowing the original material. Many a lousy film has been brilliantly edited, and many a brilliant film has been just competently put together."

There are nonetheless movies known in the industry to have been "made in the cutting room," though awareness of this does not seem strong enough in the outside world to prevent most film critics, in the present flowering of the director cult, from quite routinely thinking directors responsible for everything. One of New York's leading reviewers, at the appearance of *The Night They Raided Minsky's*, wrote: "Director William Friedkin proves his sense of cinema again by remarkable intersplicing of newsreels and striking use of black and white fade-ins to color." The intersplicing and fade-ins were done many months after Friedkin had left the picture.

Top Hollywood producers or producer teams have so much real power, and make so much money, that they are not often heard sobbing at the Bel Air Hotel about being unrecognized auteurs. But the degree of control over both story and shooting exercised by such teams as Zanuck-Brown (since *Jaws*) and Chartoff and Winkler (since *Rocky I*) is considerable.

Two other producers who illustrate the immense influence producers can have on the artistic qualities of a movie are Irwin Allen, on the popular level, and, in the younger generation, Britain's David Puttnam. In the 1970's American cinema was all agog at something caller the "disaster movie." Irwin Allen, who made *The Towering Inferno* and *The Poseidon Adventure*, was the acknowledged champion of the genre and, having seen him at work, I am prepared to give him full credit as his movies' auteur. Allen drew very well—like a professional draftsman. On an artist's sketch pad, he would draw up the plan of shot after shot. Here: the machinery. Here: the flames. Here: Paul Newman. Here: the camera. Innumerable writers came and went showing him dialogue changes for future sequences. The director—talented, to judge by his other work—was plainly reduced to chief executive officer when he worked for Irwin Allen.

David Puttnam's artistic contribution, although crucial, is of a different order, consisting essentially of the inception of the project, its general shaping, and the dynamism to pull it all together and carry it through. Puttnam made his first big appearance on the American scene with *Chariots of Fire*, directed by Hugh Hudson, which tells of the victories of two British runners at the Olympic Games in the 1920's. He followed this with another great success with no stars: Sydney Schanberg's story *The Killing Fields*, set against the Khmer Rouge massacre in Cambodia. Puttnam entrusted this politically loaded screenplay to a young English television director named Roland Joffé, who has been called by people who don't share his politics "a Marxist woolly head." But those who take celebrating victories in sport as a sign of reborn cultural assertiveness might want to give the matter further thought, as both *Chariots of Fire* and *The Killing Fields* were brainchildren of the same David Puttnam.

In the late 1960's, unsurprisingly, a challenge to the auteur principle appeared from the collectivist Left. The most famous of the cinema collectives of the period was probably the so-called "Dziga Vertov Group" (after an innovative director from early Soviet cinema), the best-known member of which was France's Jean-Luc Godard, appearing in one of his several incarnations. Having been present at the creation, as it were, Godard no doubt found it fitting to celebrate the "death" of the auteur. All members of the Dziga Vertov Group, it was claimed, were paid equally. Every shot was discussed by all. "It's an attempt to smash the usual dictatorship of the director," explained Godard, "to try to make no hierarchy." If the Dziga Vertov Group produced much that was artistically valuable, it is not widely known. Before long Godard, not notorious for his stability, abandoned the endeavor, which was a violation of the French *droit moral* in any case. (Actually Godard is Swiss.) In his newest phase he acknowledges what he calls (in English) a "move" toward religion in his *Hail, Mary*, a controversial retelling of the Virgin Birth in modern dress, with the Virgin Mary working in a gas station in Switzerland.

The conclusion of the American "auteur" debate is less clear-cut than some would like. A movie is, after all, a kind of team effort, but

* *When the Shooting Stops . . . the Cutting Begins*, by Ralph Rosenblum and Robert Karen, Penguin Books (1980).

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with leadership of the pack—in the United States—varying from one film to another. The cinema obviously is a prodigious "director's medium" compared to the theater, but not all directors exploit the full possibilities of the medium or exercise genuine directorial primacy. Control of the story line, furthermore, is much more important than people who approach films from the "visual" side often think.

There are problems of "authorship," meanwhile, which in some cases may never be solved. Most critics think John Huston's *The Asphalt Jungle* is a brilliantly directed movie, but one of the world's most famous actors, who had a frustrating experience with Huston on another film, refuses to give him any credit for it at all. "Wonderful actors," he says. "A wonderful cameraman. A wonderful story. A wonderful editor. Huston didn't even need to come out on the set."

BY THE time of his death a year ago, François Truffaut was more esteemed, and certainly more loved, than even those directors he had so envied as a young man. And the paradox is that he is not remembered at all for the "filmic" qualities of his work. He never attained the technical virtuosity of which he was in such awe. No feats of dazzling, masterly cinema artistry are attached to his name. His best films, like his first, *The 400 Blows*, are quite simple. "Children and women are my best subjects," he said with some wryness late in his life, and he is admired, in contradiction to some of his most passionately held early principles, for his characteristic stories: a little naive, some of them a little sentimental, simple, hopeful.

Truffaut tried his hand at various other types of films, frequently with indifferent success. He made movies about *crimes passionels*, the best of which was *The Soft Skin*. He made movies that the French call *Série Noire* after a famous publisher's collection of crime fiction (*Shoot the Piano Player*). He made several pictures about love and passion (*The Story of Adèle H, Jules and Jim*). His most spectacular failures were a Ray Bradbury film he directed in English called *Fahrenheidt 451* and a movie inspired by Henry James called *The Green Room*, which was such a catastrophe that United Artists decided to close its French production office, which had been responsible for the picture.

Most of the above films—some acceptable but not really recognizable as the work of Truffaut—ranged from nondescript to bad to really terrible, and if he had made only them he would have left no mark on the cinema at all. But they are not what people mean by a "Truffaut movie."

Real "Truffaut movies" are a particular series of films he made about children or young adults, most of the stories autobiographical or with strong autobiographical overtones: *The 400 Blows*; the "France" episode in *Love at Twenty*; *Stolen Kisses*; *Bed and Board*; *The Wild Child*; *Small Change*; and *Day For Night*, known in French by the highly evocative title (for the French) *La Nuit Américaine* ("American Night"), a movie about the making of a movie in which Truffaut plays a director who is hard of hearing, as he was himself. People often feel quite touched by these films. In a mysterious way they feel that they know the man who made them, and that he is telling them something about human beings like themselves.

Truffaut had a miserable childhood. His hearing was bad. In his teens he worked as a welder, and not a good one, and he prized things that many people took for granted. He never had the cushion of security that allowed him to toy with despair as with a stylish luxury. As a child he took refuge in films, but he simply could not abide a cinema that told him, in accordance with the modish ideas of the French elite culture of his early years, that the world was a rotten place, evil, doomed, that French society was unjust and repressive. If you look for this in his movies you will not find it. A world of decay and darkness would not be a world in which François Truffaut would have wanted to live, and he simply wouldn't have it. Truffaut's personal, characteristic movies often contain sadness, the disappointments and loneliness of youth, but, on examination, they are always about hope.

As for "auteurism" in its period sense, it is now so completely forgotten in France that at Truffaut's death it was hardly mentioned. Only America concerns itself with such questions now. In France you cannot even get an argument going. Auteurism, for the French, is something that happened a long time ago.

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E.L. Doctorow's "Jewish" Radicalism

Carol Iannone

BY SELF-PROCLAMATION, E.L. Doctorow is not an Ernest Hemingway or a Norman Mailer. "I tend not to get in fights in bars," he announced reassuringly in a recent interview, "I don't go hunting for big game in Africa. I don't box." His photographs show a decidedly unthreatening figure, dressed benignly in sneakers, sweater, open shirt, reading in a rocking chair, standing on a country road, peering through the branches of a birch tree.

Doctorow's first novel, *Welcome to Hard Times*, appeared in 1960, and its tone is characterized not by the bravado of a Hemingway or a Mailer but by a special note of tenuousness, ambiguity, uncertainty. In this as in much of his later work the tone is one of diffidence. Doctorow's narrators are struggling young men, insecure older men, little boys; they speak in disarming voices that underplay rather than insist, and that often seem to belie any authoritative grasp of life.

Although it was made into a movie in 1967 (starring Henry Fonda, Janice Rule, and Lon Chaney), *Welcome to Hard Times* was not the book that earned Doctorow the reputation he now enjoys—in the words of the New York *Times*—"among the leading dozen serious American novelists today." Nor was it his second novel, *Big as Life* (1966), a science-fiction fantasy that he is sufficiently ashamed of (not without justification) to have taken out of print, nor even his third, *The Book of Daniel* (1971), a fictionalized account of the Rosenberg case. These earlier novels did win their share of critical praise, but it was the hugely successful *Ragtime* (1974) that put Doctorow on the literary map. It was followed by a fifth novel, *Loon Lake* (1979), in which Doctorow rather belatedly discovered some of the conventions of nonconventional, "experimental" fiction; a sixth, this year's best-selling *World's Fair**; and a semi-autobiographical collection, *Lives of the Poets* (1984). These, together with his one play, *Drinks Before Dinner* (performed at the Public Theater in 1979), which according to the *Village Voice* tries to put "the whole case against civilization in a nutshell," pretty much round out Doctorow's work so far.

Edgar Laurence Doctorow was born in New York City in 1931 to a Russian Jewish household of intellectual and political "idealists." He was named after Edgar Allan Poe—one of Doctorow's characters terms Poe's work "that scream from the smiling face of America"—and he was educated at the Bronx High School of Science and at Kenyon College. At Kenyon he was a student of John Crowe Ransom, whose graceful influence is, however, nowhere to be found in the execrable poetry that occasionally punctuates Doctorow's fiction. After a year in the graduate drama program at Columbia, he served in the military from 1953 to 1955. Back in civilian life with a wife and family to support, Doctorow worked as a reader for CBS Television and Columbia Pictures.

It was the experience of reading so many bad scripts that convinced Doctorow he could "lie [about the West] better than these people," and led him to write *Welcome to Hard Times*. He subsequently began a meteoric career in publishing, becoming the editor-in-chief at Dial Press at the age of thirty-three. With the gradually increasing success of his fiction, he managed to pull away from publishing to various college positions, most notably at Sarah Lawrence. Today he teaches at New York University.

AMONG the influences on his world view Doctorow is fond of citing his Jewish heritage. What he means by this, however, is something at once special and vague. His grandfather's

> was a kind of socialism that represented progress, the coming into the light from centuries of darkness. . . . It was a very Jewish thing, somehow. Humanist, radical, Jewish. The sense of possibility. All the solutions were to be found right here on earth, and the supernatural was not taken seriously. . . .

To be sure, Doctorow concedes,

> The connection between one's precarious position in society and the desire for some analysis that would change society is not exclusively Jewish, but it runs all through modern Jewish history . . . a system of thought . . . that had to come from their inability to be complacent or self-congratulatory.

Whatever all this may have to do with Judaism, the "inability to be . . . self-congratulatory" certainly seems to have eluded E.L. Doctorow, who expansively informs us that he has "a kind of primitive politics, almost a primitive sense of what's fair and what's not fair, what justice is and what injustice is. . . ." That sense, it just so happens, coincides in every relevant particular with the ideological attitudes of the Left, attitudes that pervade and, finally, compromise everything he has written. The "Jewish influence" in his work has

CAROL IANNONE *teaches English literature at Iona College in New York. Her article, "Gaddis Recognized," appeared in our December issue.*

* Random House, 288 pp., $17.95.

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little to do with any desire to embody specifically Jewish ideas in art and everything to do with a desire to secure religious credit for preconceived political commitments, as when Christians quote Jesus to further Marx. ("The Ten Commandments," as Doctorow sees them, are "a very Left dogma.") Moreover there is a peculiar undercurrent of certainty in Doctorow's narrative diffidence; ultimately, he evinces as much aggression as any member of the Hemingway-Mailer school. Although Doctorow is a skillful and subtle writer, his novels, as novels, suffer from a permanent air of self-righteous grievance and from the fatal meretriciousness of the *parti pris*.

IN *Welcome to Hard Times*, the people of a Western frontier settlement are unable to stand up to an archetypal figure of evil and waste, the Bad Man from Bodie, who destroys their town in a single afternoon. A middle-aged survivor named Blue, who is also the novel's narrator, becomes the key figure in the town's reconstruction, but several years of heart-wringing work on his part as the informal mayor of Hard Times, as the new town names itself, cannot ward off yet another wave of destruction when the Bad Man returns. Unlike Gary Cooper, who through singlehanded bravery rid *his* town of not one but several bad men in the space of a few hours in the quintessential Western film, *High Noon*, Blue is a more modest kind of "hero," a very E. L. Doctorow kind of hero, doubtful and insecure. And far from having a beautiful Grace Kelly at his side, Blue must struggle to win even a modicum of affection from Molly, a tough ex-whore who constantly belittles him for what she considers his cowardice in the face of the Bad Man.

Welcome to Hard Times offers a dialectic between two kinds of "manliness": the kind Molly longs for, the personal physical courage that she believes can protect her, and the kind Blue more generously believes will protect them all. "A settled town drives them away," he insists, referring to the bad men of the frontier. "When the business is good and the life is working they can't do a thing, they're destroyed." He tries to teach young Jim, an orphan who has been raised by Molly, the senselessness of physical violence. "Jim you can squeeze the trigger and knock down a Bad Man and as sure as you've been shootin' another will come up in his place."

In the face of the second assault of the Bad Man, both approaches fail. But it is the belief in the value of physical violence that finally and most profoundly undoes the "good" side (which, rampant with racism, greed, and selfishness, is mainly "good" by default). As the town is laid waste for a second time, Blue in desperation shoots, but the Bad Man is not quite dead and in the ensuing turmoil he, Molly, and Jim all die, the first two locked in an eerie embrace. Through her obsessive terror of the Bad Man, the novel suggests, Molly has linked herself to evil, bringing upon herself the thing she most greatly feared.

Welcome to Hard Times has been called a Jewish fable in its concern with radical evil focused against an insular community. Given Doctorow's flexible definition of Judaism, and his desire for that touch of pious prestige, this is a characterization he no doubt welcomes. But the novel also shapes up as a cautionary allegory of the cold war. How does the "West" deal with aggressive evil? There seem to be no effective measures. But some things are sure: the obsession with an "enemy" and the resort to "armament" and physical violence lead to self-corruption and self-destruction.

On the aesthetic level, however, Doctorow's rather neat formula does not quite work. While obviously we are intended to understand Blue's heroism as a function of sheer persistence in the face of multiple insecurities, the character Blue emerges as flaccid and wavering, a man who is never actually certain that the game of life is worth the candle. Blue's lack of "manliness" is finally revealed not in his distaste for physical violence but in his refusal to make an unequivocal stand for life. In trying to undercut the stereotype of the *macho* frontiersman, Doctorow has created a stereotyped nebbish.

The Book of Daniel is Doctorow's major treatment of the theme of "Jewish" radicalism and, by implication, of the Jewish function in history (i.e., to suffer for "idealism"). Without dawdling over historical fact, Doctorow gives an account of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, here called Paul and Rochelle Isaacson, told from the viewpoint of their elder child and only son, Daniel, who must struggle to his own maturity in the 60's against the unusual circumstances of his past.

The Isaacsons are presented in the novel as your average postwar Bronx Jewish Communist family, "the revolutionary heirs of Jefferson and Lincoln and Andrew Jackson and Tom Paine." When they are not square-dancing at upstate summer camps or taking trips to hear Paul Robeson in concert, they are aflame for "social justice." How such sentiments as these could bring the FBI to the Isaacson door one cold autumn morning is the mystery young Daniel must unravel. He begins to find his answer in the sorry realities of the 50's:

> Of course, there is a slight oddness in the way they reacted to the knock on the door—as if they knew what was coming. But they did know what was coming. And so did everyone else who lived with some awareness into that time. There were certain convictions that American democracy would no longer permit you to hold. If you were a Jewish Communist, anti-Fascist; if you cried Peace! and cheered Vito Marcantonio at the Progressive Party rally in Yankee Stadium; if you were poor; if you were all of these things, you knew what was coming. You might even have been relieved not to have to wait any longer.

"Some people are singled out," observes the benevolent Ascher, counsel for the Isaacsons' defense, and Daniel solemnly perceives that "Law, in whatever name, protects privilege." Nevertheless, while beginning to understand that his parents were scapegoats, he cannot categorically establish their absolute innocence. Daniel learns to

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accept the possibility that his parents were "guilty," but theirs is a heroic guilt, lighting the flame now borne forward by the New Left. As Doctorow has remarked elsewhere, "In the history of this country, the radical is often sacrificed and his ideas are picked up after he himself has been destroyed."

Daniel decides to fulfill family tradition by joining the New Left on the barricades, earning his own badge of martyrdom with a mouthful of blood at the Pentagon. Thus his various personal struggles are resolved as well, including his occasional impulse to torture and humiliate his wife. His tormented younger sister Susan is not as fortunate in reconciling herself to her past and so commits suicide. At her funeral, which follows by only a few pages Daniel's graphic description of his parents' deaths in the electric chair, the hitherto nonreligious Daniel asks that prayers be said for all the Isaacson martyrs, "Pinchas, Rachele, Susele," victims of American fascism.

ONE might have thought that *The Book of Daniel* would have exhausted Doctorow's powers of invention, both in trying to create sympathy for people who served history's greatest mass murderer and one of its worst persecutors of Jews and in trying to portray postwar America as a sink of protofascism. But *Ragtime* is even more inventive.

Set in turn-of-the-century America, *Ragtime* deliberately and deliciously evokes a kind of ice-cream nostalgia which it then proceeds to juxtapose to ugly reality: the racism, sexism, brutality, poverty, and hypocrisy of the age. The story, told with a polite, deadpan innocence, concerns the members of a prosperous middle-class family living in New Rochelle and called only by their proper names in the patriarchal hierarchy: Father, Mother, Grandfather, Mother's Younger Brother, Little Boy. Also appearing in the novel are actual historical personages, engaged in exploits that are purely Doctorow's fabrication: Freud and Jung riding together through the Tunnel of Love at Coney Island; J.P. Morgan trying to interest Henry Ford in mysticism; Harry Houdini meeting the Archduke Franz Ferdinand; Emma Goldman radicalizing Evelyn Nesbit.

Father is a typical specimen of turn-of-the-century, Theodore Roosevelt manhood—he is a Harvard graduate who was once inspired by a lecture by William James, a successful manufacturer of "flags and buntings and other accoutrements of patriotism," and an Arctic explorer. He and the rest of the family become involved with a ragtime pianist named Coalhouse Walker, Jr., a magnificent specimen of Negro manhood, when they agree to care for his young woman Sarah and his illegitimate child. Before Coalhouse and Sarah can wed, however, a vicious racist prank launches him on a career of righteous terrorism in which he is joined by a group of idealistic blacks and the newly politicized Mother's Younger Brother.

Meanwhile, an impoverished Jewish immigrant named Tateh (i.e., "Daddy") defects from a career as a socialist agitator to become a successful moviemaker. Although something of a sellout, Tateh—who plays the by-now standard role in this novel of the ambiguous hero, Doctorow-style—still has an earthy love of life of the kind that Father conspicuously lacks. After Father's death on the *Lusitania*, Tateh becomes Mother's partner and the caretaker of His [own] Beautiful Daughter, Mother's towheaded Little Boy, and "the *schwartze* child," orphaned by the book's chain of violent events. Gazing fondly at them all one day, he idealistically conceives of what we are to recognize as the constituent elements of the film serial *Our Gang*: "A bunch of children who were pals, white black, fat thin, rich poor, all kinds, mischievous little urchins who would have funny adventures in their own neighborhood, a society of ragamuffins, like all of us, a gang, getting into trouble and getting out again."

INTERESTINGLY, the wave of critical exultation that first greeted *Ragtime* was followed by something of a reaction. Anthony Burgess found in *Saturday Review* that in rereading the novel, "What once seemed verbally startling is now revealed as mostly tinsel." Greil Marcus wrote in the *Village Voice* that Doctorow's characters are nothing but "aesthetic, moral, and political readymades," and Hilton Kramer in COMMENTARY called them "ideological inventions, designed to serve the purposes of a political fable" in which "bourgeois America is consigned to eternal damnation . . . and its antagonists elevated to political sainthood."

Doctorow has naturally bridled at the charge that his characters are simplistic or one-dimensional, but he himself has damningly compared his work to that of the social scientist: "Anyone who represents a class or a kind of ethnic or economic group is dealing in characterization. That's what I do." Indeed this seems to be part of his plan to avoid the inevitable bourgeois expropriation of the work of art: "I want to break out of the little world of personal experience which has bound the novel," he maintains, "to escape that suffocating closeness to the characters." Unfortunately, "the little world of personal experience" is the very feature of middle-class life that gave rise to the traditional novel in the first place. And whether or not the novel as a form is "bourgeois in spirit," as Elizabeth Hardwick has suggested, Doctorow, at any rate, has failed to produce anything that might successfully challenge this judgment. Likewise, when he wonders if "the story of any given individual" can any longer "sustain an implication for the collective fate," he neglects to suggest how else such implications might arise through fiction.

As for *Ragtime*'s historical fabrications, Doctorow demands, "Why should fiction writers be denied the composition of history?" After all, there is no such thing as objective historical truth:

> We all know examples of history that doesn't exist. We used to laugh at the Russians who in their encyclopedias attributed every major industrial invention to themselves. We knew how their great leaders who had fall-

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> en out of favor were erased from their history texts. We were innocent then: our own school and university historians had done just the same thing to whole peoples who lived and died in this country but were seriously absent from our texts: black people, Indians, Chinese.

To this one is tempted to rejoin that if there is no objective historical reality anyway, what is Doctorow so exercised about? But as is often the case with those who decry cultural monopoly in the name of pluralism, Doctorow is really working here toward a monopoly of his own.

IN *Loon Lake* (1979), the tale of a would-be working-class hero who sells out to the technocorporate state, and in the title novella of *Lives of the Poets*, in which a character eases his mid-life crisis by giving aid to the Salvadoran guerrilla movement, Doctorow seems to have reached, at least temporarily, the end of his interest in depicting the radical in art. His latest novel, at any rate, could almost be called pre-political. Indeed, *World's Fair* features Doctorow at what he does best, capturing with painstaking, sometimes exquisite accuracy a certain kind of intensive family life that we are being told on many sides has passed into history. (The short story, "A Writer in the Family," is another example.)

The Altschuler fortunes are delicately chronicled by the younger son Edgar, now a middle-aged man. Along with the little joys and satisfactions of Edgar's family, he records an increasing sense of loss and disappointment as the marriage grows cooler, the father's business fails, and the older brother flunks out of college and soon leaves home. Edgar's growing perception of life's bewitching and often mournful seriousness is especially well evoked through the rich details of his 30's Bronx boyhood.

Despite being a boyhood memoir, *World's Fair* has the tone of an elegy. The sense of fated inevitability and the gradually shrinking possibilities that Edgar chronicles in his family turn gently ironic when juxtaposed against the brash, infinite possibilities presumably represented by the 1939 World's Fair, which the family visits at the end of the book. That fair, we know, has become something of a negative *locus classicus* for the Left, a monument to the worst excesses of capitalist technology and mindless futurism. Doctorow, however, underplays all this, never departing from Edgar's tone of impeccable editorial reserve, leaving the implications to the reader.

It might thus seem in *World's Fair* that this resolutely anti-bourgeois author has succumbed to the lures of "the little world of personal experience." But not quite. For Doctorow has here forgone still another classic staple of fiction, the engagement of characters in action that tests and defines them. His characters are never allowed to become individuals whose consciousness can shape their circumstances; rather, they passively preside over an existence conditioned by various factors beyond their ken and beyond their control.

IN AN article on American fiction in the New York *Times Book Review* some months back, Doctorow mourned the "exhaustion of hope that writing can change anything." Too much current fiction, he wrote, lacks that large "moving outward, that reverberant system of judgment" to be found in writers like Dreiser and Tolstoy. Indeed, Doctorow maintained, a book that dares to engage the political dimension will be denounced as ideological. Thus, "we are writing as we live, in a kind of stunned submission to the political circumstances of our lives and the establishmentarian rule of our politicians. We are being bought off by our comfort while great moral outrages are committed in our name."*

Quite apart from the fact that our literary situation is, if anything, close to the opposite of what Doctorow maintains here, with the greatest rewards going to those writers (like himself) who flaunt their opposition to "the political circumstances of our lives," it is ironic that a writer who has forgone most of the demands of character and plot should speak, as Doctorow does, of the "salvation available in the witness and moral assignment" of the aesthetic act. No such salvation is to be glimpsed in Doctorow's work, which, deliberately eschewing the examination of the individual heart, has been gutted of the power of art to transcend political and aesthetic categories. It is Doctorow, after all, who writes in "submission" to a handful of ideas that permit him to pass easy moral judgments and that relieve him of the real risks and responsibilities of literature. Thus, his noting an "exhaustion of hope that writing can change anything" almost seems like an unconscious recognition of the spuriousness of his own work. Jews, Doctorow once remarked, "take exception to prevailing mythologies." But E.L. Doctorow seems to have swallowed them all.

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* Contrary to what Doctorow may think, his attitude is shared by many contemporary writers. The recent international conference of PEN, the writers' organization, was less about literature than about politics, and many writers took the opportunity to register their objections to the "moral outrages" committed by governments, chiefly the United States. Doctorow himself was prominent in denouncing the appearance of Secretary of State George Shultz at the conference, not so much on the credible grounds that literature and government should be kept entirely separate, as on the partisan grounds that the Secretary is a representative of the ignominious Reagan administration.

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Theologian & Activist

REINHOLD NIEBUHR: A BIOGRAPHY. By RICHARD FOX. *Pantheon. 340 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by
RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS

THE dust jacket declares, and at least some reviewers agree, that Richard Fox's *Reinhold Niebuhr* is the definitive biography. It is in many respects an outstanding biography, but if definitive means that it is the last word, there is much reason to hope that it is not the definitive biography.

Fox, a historian at Reed College, Oregon, was first alerted to the importance of Reinhold Niebuhr by his teachers Robert McAfee Brown and Michael Novak. The combination of Brown and Novak suggests an intellectual interplay that might have intrigued the infinitely dialectical mind of Reinhold Niebuhr. Since their days together at Stanford in the 1960's, Brown has become an influential proponent of the liberation theologies issuing from Latin America and Novak has made his mark as an authority on the moral vitalities of democratic capitalism. In the lines and between the lines of *Reinhold Niebuhr,* Fox is making up his mind about which of his Stanford mentors got Niebuhr right. Brown has presumably gone "beyond Niebuhr" at critical points, while Novak unabashedly calls himself a Niebuhrian.* In the final analysis it would seem that Fox believes that Brown comes closer to getting Niebuhr right. Clearly he shares Brown's uneasiness about the later Niebuhr's allegiance to liberal democracy and consequent critique of liberal blindness to the threat of Communism.

But it may be misleading to put this ideological dispute up front in discussing *Reinhold Niebuhr.* Fox is primarily concerned to tell the life, and something of the times, of the most celebrated, and probably the most influential, American religious thinker of this century. He tells the story better and more fully than it has been told to date. The book, he says, "is also an effort to write intellectual history." In this he is less successful, perhaps because, as he acknowledges, he is not a theologian. Whatever the reason, he seems to lack the patience or inclination or competence, or all three, to deal with Niebuhr's ideas on their own terms.

Fox is a historian of the school that believes that the truth about ideas is to be discovered in the needs they meet and the designs they serve. Admittedly, Niebuhr himself was something of a politician of ideas and not above weighing truths by the measure of their utility to the causes he would advance. The early and radical Niebuhr of the 1930's wrote of the role of intellectuals in providing the "emotionally potent oversimplifications" that are required to motor the struggle of the proletariat. "These illusions are dangerous because they justify fanaticism; but their abandonment is perilous because it inclines to inertia," said Niebuhr. A later and wiser Niebuhr wrote of the much greater peril in the corruption that comes from telling useful lies. But the sharp-eyed Fox refuses to let Niebuhr become wise. He is ever on the lookout for what Niebuhr is up to with his thinking, and thus gives short shrift to the possibility that frequently, if not most of the time, Niebuhr might have been up to thinking. Adhering to the historian's hermeneutics of suspicion, the author tells us a great deal about what Niebuhr tried to do with ideas but very little about the ideas by which Niebuhr was tried.

What Niebuhr did with ideas, with his energies, his talents, and his opportunities, Fox relates in a manner worthy of the tale. He begins at the beginning, in 1892 in Logan County, Illinois, where Gustav Niebuhr was a pastor of the *Deutsche Evangelische Synode von Nord-Amerika* and the father of three sons, Walter, Reinhold, and Helmut Richard. Walter would die in middle age, after a life of no particular achievement but of considerable bother to others. Helmut Richard would go on to a long and distinguished career teaching theology at Yale. He was, in the estimate of most theologians then and now, a more careful and perhaps more original thinker than his older brother Reinhold. A great strength of the present biography is the close and tender attention paid to the relationship between Richard and Reinie, as Reinhold was called both early and late. Reinie was his father's favorite and succeeded him as head of the family. He admired his father unstintingly and Fox's repeated thesis is that Reinhold's subsequent life was spurred by the need to fulfill and excel his father's work. As with most psychological explanations, this one is not always persuasive, but Fox generally resists the temptation to push it beyond the limits of plausibility or employ it to reductionist ends.

As HIS father fled Germany to seek a new land, so Reinhold continued the sojourn from his father's constricted immigrant world to a professorship at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, the Medal of Freedom, and the cover of *Time* magazine. The first obstacle to making it in America was the "German" in German Evangelical Synod. Overcoming that obstacle was particularly urgent at the time of World War I, and Reinhold soon discovered himself becoming an intense American patriot. In his first assignments for the church he was a vigorous partisan of the Americanizers who were ea-

RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS, a Lutheran *pastor, is director of the Rockford Institute's Center on Religion and Society. His most recent book is* The Naked Public Square: Religion and Democracy in America.

* See his article, "Needing Niebuhr Again," COMMENTARY, September 1972.

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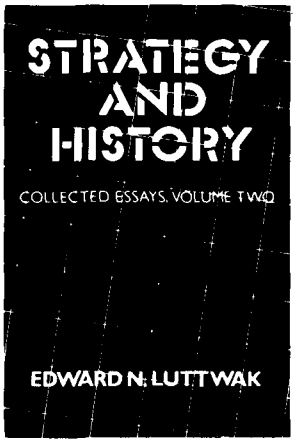

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Edward N. Luttwak is research professor and senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University. He is a consultant to the Defense and State Departments on international affairs and national security policy and the author of a number of books and articles on strategic and military affairs, including *Strategy and Politics* and *The Grand Strategy of the Soviet Union*.

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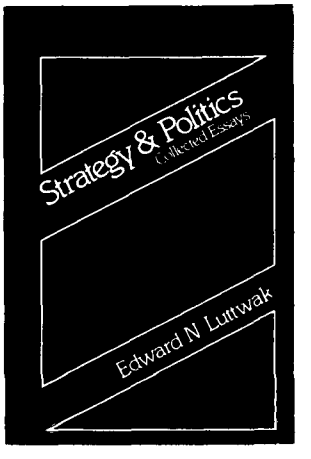

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ger to drop immigrant language and identity.

There was also a theological component in this change. The Evangelical Synod represented a mix of Lutheran and Reformed (Calvinist) traditions, and accommodation to an America of Puritan heritage clearly dictated that preference be given the second. By a series of transmogrifications the Evangelical Synod eventually became part of today's United Church of Christ, which until recently was very much a part of the American cultural and religious mainstream. As Fox perceptively notes, albeit in passing, Niebuhr himself never entirely abandoned the Lutheran side of his legacy, and this helped him to maintain a critical distance from the mainline Protestant propensity to identify "Christian America" with the coming of the Kingdom of God.

But this critical distance would become evident only much later. The young Niebuhr was engrossed in being accepted by a Protestantism set upon "Americanizing Christianity and Christianizing America." After years in third-rate church schools, which he deeply resented, he arrived at Yale to discover that the study of theology there was dominated by courses in practical philanthropy, systematic sociology, labor problems, American social conditions, and municipal good government. Although determined to figure in what Fox calls the "Protestant-socialist-pacifist nexus," Niebuhr already betrayed his penchant for ambivalence by electing courses in philosophy, ethical theory, and Bible.

And yet ambivalence was not permitted to temper militance, for "only a militant church was capable of enlisting his own devotion," Fox writes. In the 1920's Niebuhr became pastor of Bethel Church in a respectable middle-class neighborhood of Detroit and soon turned it into a prospering center of social reformism, for which the alleged depredations of Henry Ford served as a convenient foil. In later years Niebuhr would say that he was most essentially a pastor and would speak nostalgically of the parish, but at the time his passion for militance carried him into the organi-

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zational swirl and speaking circuits of radicalisms that had gone beyond liberal reform. As he wrote in a letter to the *New Republic*:

> Liberalism lacks the spirit of enthusiasm, not to say fanaticism, which is so necessary to move the world out of its beaten tracks. It is too intellectual and too little emotional to be an efficient force in history. It is the philosophy of the middle-aged, lacking the fervency of youth and its willingness to take a chance and accept a challenge. It approaches the old order with friendly mien, tries to blindfold it and lead it upon a new track without hurting the old order's feelings or losing its friendship.

Niebuhr's energy, plus his extraordinary talents as speaker and writer, made it almost inevitable that he would be courted by those who were working for "an authentically new order." In the early 1920's most of those people were to be found in the organizational networks of mainline Protestantism. Fox's observation is not without parallels in our own day: "At a time when secular liberals, disillusioned by Versailles or intimidated by officially sanctioned repression of dissent, tended to give up on politics in general and radicalism in particular, religious liberals edged further Left in large numbers." (In 1985 the *Nation* would assert that the only Left we have left is the religious Left.)

NIEBUHR was soon appearing regularly in the liberal *Christian Century*—with which he would later break over its pacifist stance—and was an unquestioned star of the college and Christian-retreat circuit. "Undergraduates squeezed into the largest armories and municipal halls in the Midwest to hear him challenge bourgeois piety." Little wonder that the president of Union Seminary sought him out, despite his lack of proper academic credentials, to lend some spice to that venerable institution. From 1928 until his death in 1971, Union would serve as his base, and its students, say many who knew him, would remain Niebuhr's first love.

There he allied himself with Norman Thomas and the Socialist party, reinforced the much more radical politics of his Union colleague Harry Ward, and helped students to criticize "the unethical character of our entire civilization." In 1930 he was the leading spirit in the formation of the Fellowship of Socialist Christians (*not*, as some accounts have it, the Fellowship of Christian Socialists—even then Niebuhr sensed that politics must always be adjectival, no more than penultimate to ultimate commitments). FSC was founded upon the belief that "We cannot save our civilization at all except we change its whole basis." Such generalizations served as a common bond until, in 1932, Niebuhr published *Moral Man and Immoral Society*. The book did not depart from the radical orthodoxy of class struggle, but Niebuhr did rock his pacifist allies with his emphasis on the inescapability of violence, and profoundly disturbed many others (whom he would come to call "sentimentalists") with his "pessimistic" analysis of the pervasiveness of sin in every human structure and enterprise. "Like a Lonely Soul" is the title Fox gives the chapter describing this period. With *Moral Man*, Reinhold Niebuhr embarked upon a course of dissent, with the result that he would frequently be viewed as a security risk to all prevailing wisdoms.

UNTIL his first stroke in 1952, Niebuhr never let up. From his pen flowed hundreds of articles, and books, both major and minor, charting a complicated and sometimes convoluted way toward moral responsibility in an intractably self-contradictory world. Among the books: *Reflections on the End of an Era* (1934), *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics* (1935), *Beyond Tragedy* (1937), *Christianity and Power Politics* (1940), *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness* (1944), and *Faith and History* (1949). *The Irony of American History* (1952) makes particularly timely reading today, and the Gifford Lectures, *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (published in one volume in 1949), will, I believe, be timely so long as there are men who think on such things.

Fox expresses very nicely the

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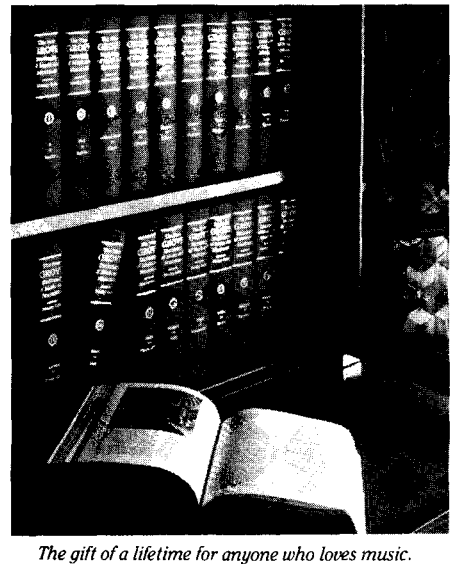

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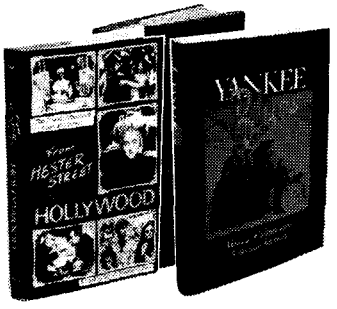

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style that marked the person and his work:

> Niebuhr's life, like all lives brought to self-consciousness or subjected to scrutiny, was a pattern of paradoxes and a sequence of ironies. The uniqueness of Reinhold Niebuhr lay in the energy and zeal with which he pursued paradox and irony in both life and thought. The prophet-priest seeking influence and humility. The German-American-Anglophile. The religious-secular preacher chastising the pious and chiding the worldly. The teacher-academic who distrusted the scholars and hoped for their respect. The liberal crusader against liberalism. The Jamesian relativist who embraced the God of Abraham and the revelation of Jesus. The booming polemicist beset with hidden anxieties. Truth could be expressed only in paradox, he believed, and life lived as a succession of pregnant contradictions.

That captures the style but, in my judgment, Fox does less than justice to the substance. As I mentioned earlier, Fox plays heavily on the psychologizing theme of father image with respect to the influence of Reinhold's father and to Reinhold's influence in sibling rivalry with H. Richard. But the psychologizing is less than is customary in contemporary biographies, and only offends when Fox states his speculations as fact. There is, however, a frequent condescension to his subject. For instance, Fox records that Niebuhr, approached by someone who wanted to do a biography of him, expressed his "embarrassment" with the proposal. In a typically egregious analytical lurch, Fox comments that this expression of embarrassment "allowed [Niebuhr] to see himself as a humble innocent trying, with admitted awkwardness, to prevent a biography from advertising his significance." It seems simpler and more probable to think that Niebuhr was a man of good manners and it is good manners to demur when others direct attention to your importance.

THE condescension is more frequent on the subject of Niebuhr's political judgments. Fox does not hide his lack of sympathy for Niebuhr's "turn to the Right" in midjourney. Regarding the later Niebuhr of principled anti-Communism, he writes that "despite his dialectical play of mind he could detect no hidden virtues in the vice of his earlier radical commitments." Here and elsewhere Fox would have us believe that the mature Niebuhr arrived at his political views in a twenty-five-year fit of absentmindedness, so to speak. The evidence, however, indicates that Niebuhr remained in lively and explicit conversation with his earlier views, although as time passed he esteemed less highly than his biographer apparently does the virtues in the political vices of his younger years.

John Murray Cuddihy, in *No Offense: Civil Religion and Protestant Taste*,* a book not included in Fox's bibliography, has offered a scathing portrait of Niebuhr as a man with his eye firmly fixed on the main chance. Fox's style is not so biting but his substantive judgment is not dissimilar. Early on we are told that Niebuhr's driving search was for "the path of practical accomplishment and access to power in mainstream America." Later he writes about Niebuhr's love for the biblical prophets and fascination with the posture of righteous indignation. "The cynic might suggest that prophetic garb was a convenient disguise for self-aggrandizement," says Fox. While he implicitly distances himself from "the cynic," Fox is clearly not unsympathetic to the suggestion.

About the Niebuhr of 1948, who had helped to found Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), an organization given in those days to the vigorous anti-Communism of which Fox does not approve, we are told: "The culture craved a spokesman for the tragic sense of life; Niebuhr had the intellectual skill, religious credentials, and personal charisma to step forward and seize the day." At the end of the book, Niebuhr is summed up as a man "uniquely gifted and well-placed to seize the portion of opportunity offered a provincial German-American parson's son in early 20th-century America." Fox immediately adds

* Seabury, 1978.

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that, while Niebuhr "could not aspire to the heights of leadership" occupied by such of his heroes as Lincoln, Churchill, and Stafford Cripps, he had nonetheless "helped transform American culture and the Protestant faith." In short, his eye was ever on the main chance and, according to Fox, the name of the main chance was worldly power.

Fox quotes the words of Abraham Joshua Heschel with which, at the funeral in 1971, he eulogized Niebuhr's religious devotion: "He appeared among us like a sublime figure out of the Hebrew Bible.... Niebuhr's life was a song in the form of deeds, a song that will go on forever." To be sure, eulogies possess poetic license, but Heschel was also proposing a substantively different explanation of Niebuhr and his life. Between the explanations of Fox and Heschel, Niebuhr would likely have declined to choose, for he understood better than almost anyone the ambiguities of human motives.

In viewing Niebuhr's song as a song of self rather than as a song of that which transcends the self, Fox follows the rules of the historical guild. It is, they modestly say, beyond the competence of the historian to deal with devotion to God. Their immodesty is in the failure to recognize that it is beyond the competence of the historian to declare that devotion to God is really devotion to something other than God. The academic habit is to make religious faith manageable, and thereby to make religious faith unrecognizable. It is a habit, perhaps a professional imperative, which Richard Fox unfortunately indulges.

Fox's Niebuhr is the almost totally political animal for whom, because of biographical accident, theology became an improbable instrument of achievement. The general picture is that of a frenetically driven activist whom one can hardly imagine reading, never mind writing, a book such as *The Nature and Destiny of Man*. The Niebuhrian thesis, says Fox, is that "there could be no ultimate fulfillment in the political realm and yet no salvation apart from the life of political commitment." The first part of the thesis is undoubtedly correct, but the idea that there is no salvation apart from politics is, I believe, profoundly un-Niebuhrian. Niebuhr frequently expressed his admiration for Mennonite pacifists and others who in principle remained aloof from the political arena. His published prayers and many passages in his major books sharply relativize the pretensions of the political. His argument was not that there is no salvation or ultimate fulfillment apart from the political arena, but that those who are called to enter that arena must do so on the basis of what he termed realism. Reinhold may never have been tempted, as his brother Richard was tempted, to enter a monastery, but he understood the truth in the temptation.

Fox's near-total politicizing of the man results in a pathetic portrayal of Niebuhr's last fifteen years when he was an invalid and could no longer take an active part in the political game. In *The Irony of American History*, Niebuhr made sharp distinctions among pathos, irony, and tragedy. Briefly stated, he argued that pathos is the result of unhappy circumstance, the pity of it all. Irony is the evil and unintended consequence of noble intention. Tragedy is the result of conscious choice between conflicting goods. What Fox sees as the pathetic last years might better be viewed in terms of the dignity of the tragic.

In his mature writings, Niebuhr anguished over the limitations of the political, and there is ample evidence to believe that he wondered whether, in the intense political engagements of his life, he had chosen the lesser good. In this light, the sadness of the last years may derive not from his no longer being able to do what he had chosen to do but from his doubt as to whether he had chosen well. In Niebuhr's theology, however, tragedy is not beyond redemption. And yet is it precisely Fox's inability or unwillingness to deal with Niebuhr's theology that makes the last

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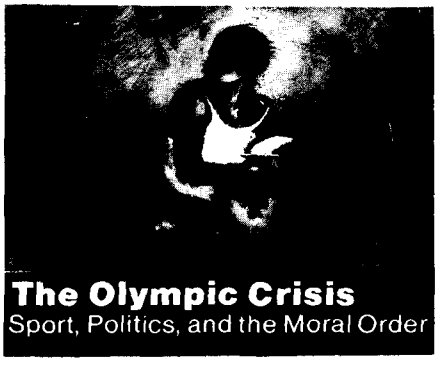

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years appear as unmitigated pathos. In Fox's telling of the story, Niebuhr's theology is little more than the conceptual armory for the conquest of the main chance of politics.

Let us strain to be fair. Maybe Fox is right. Maybe those admirers whom the philosopher Morton White dubbed "atheists for Niebuhr" were also right. Maybe the theology—all the talk about creaturehood, covenant, cross, resurrection, and transcendent promise—was incidental to, even a distraction from, the essential Niebuhr of political thought and action. And it may be that Niebuhr's passionately expressed support for Israel, his asserted connections between biblical faith and democratic governance, his insistence upon the inherent evil of Marxist-Leninism, and his host of other positions were all but instances of his opportunism and captivity to the political and intellectual exigencies of his time.

It may all be. Only God and now, we trust, Reinhold Niebuhr can say for sure. But that is not how Niebuhr explained himself while he was here. Of course it is possible that in some respects Fox understands Niebuhr better than Niebuhr understood himself. But the definitive biography, when it is written, will give Reinhold Niebuhr at least equal time.

The Making of SDI

STAR WARRIORS: A PENETRATING LOOK INTO THE LIVES OF THE YOUNG SCIENTISTS BEHIND OUR SPACE AGE WEAPONRY. By WILLIAM J. BROAD. *Simon and Schuster. 245 pp. $16.95.*

Reviewed by GERALD M. STEINBERG

IN MARCH 1983, when President Reagan launched the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), he took the U.S. defense establishment by surprise. Most analysts had come to accept the late Bernard Brodie's dictum that nuclear bombs are absolute weapons against which there can be no defense. Those advocating the rapid development of technologies applicable to ballistic-missile defense (BMD) were derided as fanatics and publicity seekers. Two such advocates, Senator Malcolm Wallop and Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Daniel O. Graham, were ridiculed as "space cadets" consumed by science-fiction images of "Star Wars" that had no basis in reality.

The radical change in perspective which culminated in the launching of SDI was the result of a number of factors. For one thing, the massive Soviet strategic build-up and the search for an American response had reopened the debate on strategic defense within the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Department of Defense. In addition, the nuclear-freeze movement, European peace protests, and the pastoral letter of the American Catholic bishops criticizing deterrence by threat of retaliation as immoral, reinforced the President's personal desire to find an alternative to Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD). A defensive system which held out the promise of "rendering nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete" would serve to answer many of these concerns.

As William Broad states in *Star Warriors*, SDI is also a product of important technological progress. Broad, a science reporter for the New York *Times*, places particular emphasis on several meetings between Edward Teller and the President, in which Teller explained the potential use of x-ray lasers for ballistic-missile defense.

Star Warriors is a loose account of a week spent visiting the "inventors of the x-ray laser" at the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory in California. Unfortunately, its analysis of both the technology and the strategic issues is generally simplistic and occasionally misleading. Broad's exclusive concentration on x-ray lasers and on Livermore all but ignores the other technological components of SDI and the important work taking place elsewhere. In addition, the book focuses on the

GERALD M. STEINBERG *is a member of the political-science department at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and the author of* Satellite Reconnaissance. *He is currently a visiting research fellow in the SDI project at the Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation at the University of California.*

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personalities of the scientists and engineers at Livermore, portraying them as if they were characters from a Hollywood production like *Revenge of the Nerds*, obsessively punching keys on their computer terminals all night long, subsisting on a diet of Coke and junk food, and oscillating between depression and exuberance. Broad makes much of such personal eccentricities, but in fact these nocturnal overachievers do not seem particularly different from other talented young and highly driven men and women working in Silicon Valley or, for that matter, composing their first novels or designing sports cars.

Politically, Broad finds his subjects at Livermore to be "obsessed" with the Soviet Union. We are told that Rod Hyde, one member of the team, "hated the Soviets with a passion," and that Peter Hagelstein's initial reluctance to participate in a test of the nuclear-pumped x-ray laser was overcome after he was given a copy of Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* to read. But Broad also finds that their views of the Soviet Union are far from consistent. On the one hand, Teller and his protégé, Lowell Wood, argue that the USSR is incapable of matching American technological achievements, and that in the effort to do so the Soviets will stretch their economy to its limits, perhaps inviting collapse. On the other hand, even as they speak of the backwardness of the Soviet Union, the inventors of the x-ray laser also warn of imminent Soviet breakthroughs in the area of space warfare and directed energy. These contradictions are important, according to Broad, because they affect assessments of the Soviet ability to develop technology to offset SDI.

Broad suggests that technical assessments from Livermore are similarly distorted by personal interests which operate independently of physics and politics. He portrays Wood as a careerist who has long sought to increase his power at the lab, and beyond, by gaining larger budgets and increased personal prestige. The x-ray laser and SDI effort reversed a period of decline for Wood personally and for the lab. To get the x-ray laser, he cajoled, bribed, and bullied the younger scientists at Livermore, including Hagelstein. Under these circumstances, Broad concludes, it might be difficult for Wood to admit to flaws and inconsistencies in the project.

According to Broad, Wood initially was an enthusiastic proponent of the "pop-up" mode for deploying the system. The x-ray laser apparatus would be stored in missiles on submarines stationed off the Soviet coast. Were U.S. early-warning satellites to detect a massive Soviet attack, these missiles would be launched immediately. Depending on the speed with which they were launched and deployed, and the duration of the boost phase of Soviet missiles, the laser would then have from 30 seconds to two minutes to aim and fire.

When confronted with various technical criticisms of this program, Wood admitted that there were flaws in it, and he then argued that permanent orbital battle stations would be necessary. Still later, in response to evidence of operational deficiencies and vulnerabilities in the orbital system (which had led Teller to develop the pop-up mode in the first place), Wood acknowledged difficulties with both systems.

These inconsistencies are cited in *Star Warriors* as evidence that the pursuit of x-ray lasers and SDI at Livermore is not the result of dispassionate technical analysis but rather of a combination of professional hubris, ideology, and self-interest. As with the atomic and the hydrogen bombs, the development of x-ray lasers pumped by nuclear explosions constitutes a fascinating problem in physics and a professional challenge of the first magnitude. That is why, within the weapons community, competition for primacy in this area is intense. To those engaged in it, Broad writes, SDI represents a stable source of funding and, therewith, the freedom to pursue the challenge. The effort to build a usable weapon system is secondary.

IN THE light of the evidence gathered at Livermore, Broad announces that his initially positive inclina-

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tion toward the x-ray laser and SDI has been reversed. Before his visit to Livermore, he had "dismissed the critics" of SDI both because of their vested interest in MAD and because their own efforts at ballistic-missile defense in previous decades had failed. Yet Broad's claim must be treated skeptically. In May 1982, a full year before his trip to Livermore and professed conversion, he wrote an op-ed piece in the New York *Times* entitled "Star Wars: Pentagon Lunacy." Broad seems to have discovered what he expected to find at Livermore.

More importantly, this journalistic analysis is flawed by its narrow focus and its lack of historical perspective. Compared with those of scientists involved in other major development projects, the personal characteristics, eccentricities, ideological beliefs, and inconsistencies of Teller, Wood, Hyde, and Hagelstein are hardly unique. Scientists who worked on the Manhattan and Apollo projects, for example, were characterized by similar personality traits and political beliefs, but their efforts succeeded brilliantly. There are of course clear technical differences between these earlier projects and SDI, but we already have evidence of a significant number of technical achievements in the areas of lasers and computing associated with the SDI effort. The potential that may yet result from the combined enthusiasm, skill, and dedication of American scientists should not be underestimated or trivialized.

Dayan & His World

MY FATHER, HIS DAUGHTER. By YAËL DAYAN. *Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 289 pp. $17.95.*

Reviewed by DANIEL CASSE

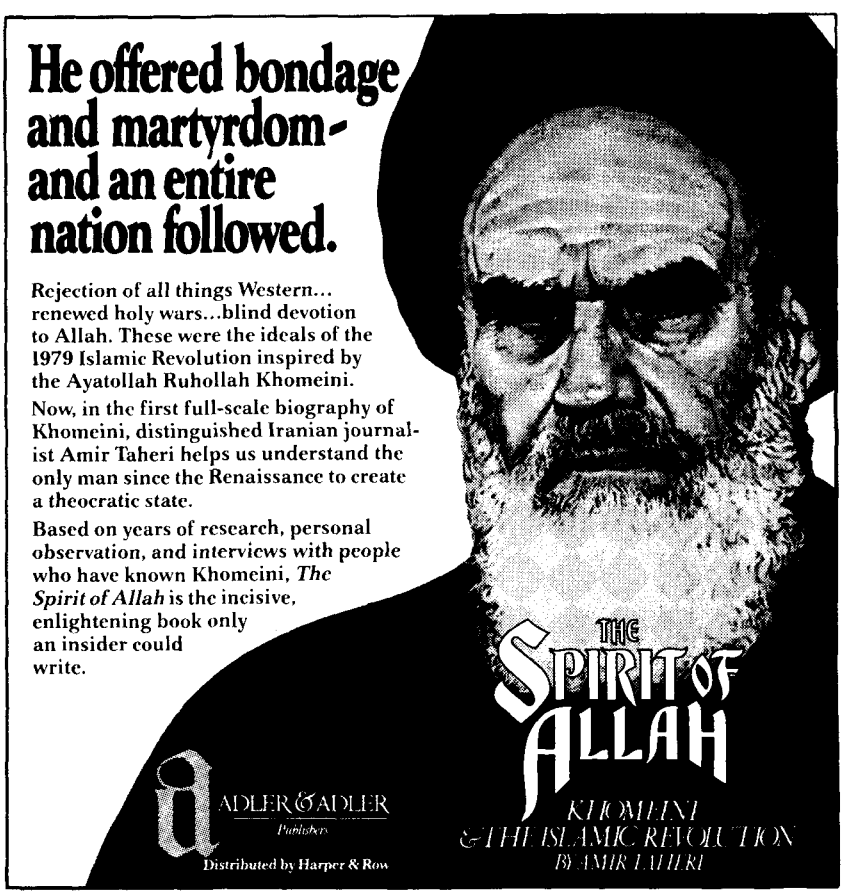
IN 1967, during the Six-Day War, the Israeli government press office circulated a photograph of Moshe and Yaël Dayan that appeared in hundreds of newspapers in Europe and North America. The photograph captures father and daughter, both in army uniform, smiling as they walk across the newly conquered Sinai desert. It is an image of Moshe Dayan at his best: war hero, father, charismatic symbol of Israeli pride.

Seventeen years later that photo graces the title page of Yaël Dayan's *My Father, His Daughter*, the most intimate portrait of Dayan yet written. In the intervening years, Dayan has been the subject of several books, including his own autobiography, and innumerable magazine articles, not all of them flattering. Since his death in 1981, students of Israeli history and politics have conceded only that there is no consensus on what sort of man he was. To some, he is the brilliant war hero who led Israel to its greatest military triumph in 1967; to others, an egocentric general whose carelessness and shortsightedness left the country unprepared at the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War. Yet despite these conflicting images, no one denies that Dayan was an integral part of Israeli history: born on the first kibbutz, a leader in the War of Independence, chief of staff during the Sinai campaign, Minister of Defense during the wars of 1967 and 1973, and finally, as Foreign Minister, one of the architects of the Camp David accords.

The task before Yaël Dayan is somehow to reconcile her father's status as a historical figure with the sharply divergent assessments of his career. She is herself a recognized author, having published five novels in English. In this, her first foray into nonfiction, Miss Dayan portrays her own life and that of her father through a selection of memories from childhood, adolescence, and maturity, and, perhaps out of necessity, she provides a vivid description of Israeli life over the past forty years.

Yaël Dayan suggests, and she is not the first to do so, that Israel continues to live under a Dayan complex. Precisely what she means by this we are never sure. Dayan has often been praised, for example, for his role as the architect of "normalization" on the West Bank immediately following the Six-Day

DANIEL CASSE, *a new contributor, is managing editor of the* Public Interest.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War of 1967. It is true that the decision to unite Jerusalem and maintain day-to-day life on the West Bank determined the character of Israeli policy toward the territories from then on. But when we try to explain how Dayan himself understood the Israeli presence in the West Bank we discover a maze of contradictions. He opposed any sort of a Palestinian Arab state, yet was equally opposed to annexation of the territories. He criticized the expropriation of land for the building of settlements, but was the foremost advocate of creating "facts" on the West Bank.

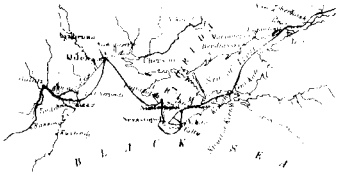
As Defense Minister, similarly, Dayan was at once a ruthless administrator and an accommodating diplomat, capable of destroying an Arab home in the morning before sitting down to tea with a local sheikh in the afternoon. While there are those who insist that Dayan had some vision of Israeli-Arab coexistence, even Yaël Dayan is hard put to describe it. It is this same undefined vision without a policy that the current generation of Israelis has inherited—and in that sense they are, truly, still living under a Dayan complex.

BUT Moshe Dayan's legacy extends far beyond both his military exploits and the specific policies he stood for. During most of his adult life, Dayan was perceived—both in Israel and abroad—as the personification of Israeli nationalism. Yet he was not in any sense an observant Jew, nor, to judge by his indifference to the issue of immigration from the Diaspora, was he a particularly ardent Zionist. He certainly did not share Ben-Gurion's intellectual understanding of a Jewish state; according to his daughter, the only books Dayan read seriously were the Bible and the poetry of his contemporary Nathan Alterman. Nonetheless, he possessed an almost romantic devotion to his country, expressed not so much in his extraordinary display of public-spiritedness as in his passionate attachment to the physical land of Israel.

On this aspect of Dayan's character, Yaël Dayan tells us more than any of his biographers. The book's most moving passages convey her father's love for the flowers, rocks, and riverbeds of his country. It was in the desert, she writes, that Dayan seemed most satisfied. She fondly recalls the times her father would keep her from school so she could accompany him in exploring the Negev desert during a night patrol—for Dayan, *that* was the authentic Israeli education. Even Dayan's legendary passion for archeology—a hobby that has become a national pastime in Israel—can be explained in these terms. Spending hours digging among ruins, Dayan felt he was creating a direct link between himself and the ancient biblical Israel, skipping over the generations of European Jewish life that lay in between.

BOTH in private and in public, Dayan was known to be intolerant of inferiors, blunt in speech, and instinctual in action. Even as his popularity soared he remained aloof, never aligning himself too closely with friends or political colleagues. Dayan, of course, used these traits to his advantage, taking the initiative in military decisions and, when the opportunity arose in 1977, crossing party lines to join Menachem Begin's cabinet. This was the pragmatic, self-confident Dayan. But, as his daughter reveals, the private Dayan did not always share such strength of character.

In the years following the 1956 Sinai campaign—a period almost untouched in his autobiography—Dayan separated from his wife and embarked on a series of widely publicized affairs with women his daughter describes as cheap and vulgar. Yet he was remarkably indifferent to gossip and remained unconcerned with his public image. At the same time he grew disenchanted with his new life as Minister of Agriculture, and later seemed to lose interest in politics altogether. As his children grew up, Dayan found himself alone, with little enthusiasm for anything. His daughter tells us that he became



The Jews of Odessa
A Cultural History, 1794-1881
STEVEN J. ZIPPERSTEIN

Founded in 1794 as a frontier city on the Black Sea, Odessa quickly became one of Russia's busiest seaports—a boomtown, with opportunities on every hand and too few people to seize them. Settlers of all nationalities were welcome in the new city, and many Jews leaped at the chance to try their fortunes. Soon, Odessa's Jewish community had grown into one of the largest, wealthiest, and most culturally fertile in Europe. The first history of Jewish Odessa in any language, this book traces the rise of the city's Jewish community from the earliest days to the pogroms of 1881 that erupted after the assassination of Alexander II. The author emphasizes the acculturation of the Jewish community, describing changes in behavior, attitude, and ideology as reflected in its schools, synagogues, newspapers, and other institutions. During the period covered, patterns were set that continued to affect the community's cultural development well into the second decade of the twentieth century. $32.50

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impatient, lost his sense of humor, and developed an obsession with money. The 1967 war and his appointment to the office of Minister of Defense revived his spirits. But the international fame that came with it, Yaël Dayan observes, contributed to a previously unseen materialism and selfishness that culminated in his marriage to a fashionable woman who is spared none of Miss Dayan's contempt.

These and other stories of indiscretion, poor judgment, and an obsession with death convey Dayan's unease as a civilian. It seems he was at his best only in times of war; peacetime invariably left him restless, ill, or lonely. Even his success at Camp David was short-lived; he resigned from the government when the West Bank autonomy talks did not proceed as he had envisioned. In his last bout with public life, he headed an ill-conceived splinter party that had a disastrous showing in the 1981 elections, three months before his death from cancer.

In her final two chapters, Yaël Dayan lapses into unnecessary and unhappy detail about her father's will (in which he bequeathed almost his entire fortune to his second wife) and the scandals that resulted from it. But just as Dayan's weaknesses do not detract from his extraordinary contribution to Israeli life, neither do these chapters detract from what is perhaps the most complete picture of Dayan and the world he inhabited.

The Marshal

PÉTAIN: HERO OR TRAITOR? By HERBERT R. LOTTMAN. *Morrow. 416 pp. $17.95.*

Reviewed by EDWARD PEARCE

PHILIPPE PÉTAIN died in 1951, a prisoner on the Isle D'Yeu below the Brittany peninsula where he was held for the final six years of his life, lurching and wheezing between lucid intervals to an end at the cruel age of ninety-five. Whatever the answer to the rhetorical question of Herbert Lottman's subtitle, hero or traitor, the punishment dealt to this man who had outlived judgment and honor, but who had done for the French what the French had been glad to have him do, seems peculiarly irrelevant and wanton.

Pétain, notionally sentenced to death for his part in the collaborationist France of World War II, had been one of the most effective and humane soldiers of World War I. A wise skeptic about the brilliant and bloodily futile French initiatives in that war, he was also the man who saved the Allies by holding Verdun when collapse seemed days away, and the general who, with a minimum of blood, stopped a mutiny which had had all the potential both for losing the war and for duplicating events in Russia. The debt of France and its allies to this pedestrian but wholly professional and competent soldier was beyond computation. The tragedy of his old age—he was eighty-four when he became head of the toy theater assembled to govern residual France from the spa town of Vichy—was all the greater.

Herbert Lottman is a fair man; in his book he makes few moral judgments and resists the temptation of stereotyping. His chief defect, apart from an execrable style, is that preoccupation with his subject creates a single-track Indian trail; one cannot write illuminatingly about the France which collapsed in 1940 without a more substantial background on the France which was rotting through the 30's. Indeed, the events of 1940 have links with 1870, when France went through military humiliation, red and white terror, and the division of the country into an antiquarian pre-fascist Right and a Left which most people today would find sensibly conservative in economics but militantly anti-clerical. A little more about France, which after all collaborated as ardently as did Pétain, would have helped us to understand the Marshal better. Lottman seems uneasy with the earlier currents of French history.

France was for seventy years a country whose political opposition was in residential exile. It coped with the first war—just barely—because that was perceived as a simple matter of clashing nationalisms. When the second war came, not only was France, like Britain, unprepared, but its ultra-Right (ironically sustained by the Communists for whom the party's correct line was the Hitler-Stalin pact) had a deeply sympathetic view of National Socialism. Not least did the heirs of the anti-Dreyfusards delight in a neighboring regime with decisive policies toward "*les sales juifs*," "the dirty Jews."

In fact, Philippe Pétain, insofar as he took a political stance, did not belong to the ultra-Right. Lottman tells the story (based on rumor) of how, a few years earlier, Marshal Hubert Lyautey had canvassed support among his peers for a *coup d'état*. He received support from most, including Ferdinand Foch, but a categorical and highly constitutional "No" from Pétain, who proclaimed his obligation to the inimical but legal government of Edouard Herriot. His rejection of Lyautey with "marmoreal silence" was impeccable; it was also the action of a man sixteen years younger than the foolish, fond old man who was to assume the royal plural, "*Nous, Philippe Pétain*," in the bathetic surroundings of the Hotel Du Parc, Vichy.

The flaw in Pétain which brought him to that melancholy condition, apart from old age and vanity, was the very quality which had made him so often correct in his judgments on the Western front in World War I. The mentality which was equipped for intelligent defense by retreat responded to bad news with self-feeding pessimism. In 1940, by gradual degrees, pessimism had become defeatism, and defeatism had turned into a perverse pleasure at being proved right and a mistaken but understandable belief that France was joining the winning side.

Because France had been crushed in the war; because Pétain was given the scepter as the French government retreated across the country; because some form of depleted French state was better than the direct rule of a German provincial governor; and because the old man had converted himself into a national alibi for a defeated coun-

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try—for all these reasons, plenty of reputable democratic politicians like Herriot and Flandin participated in the early days of Vichy. But although Pétain might be admired as a Republican Marshal, the powers he took (and which were gladly granted him) were those of rule by peremptory decree. The slogans of Pétainist France—"Family, Nation, Work"—were those of any golf-course colonel.

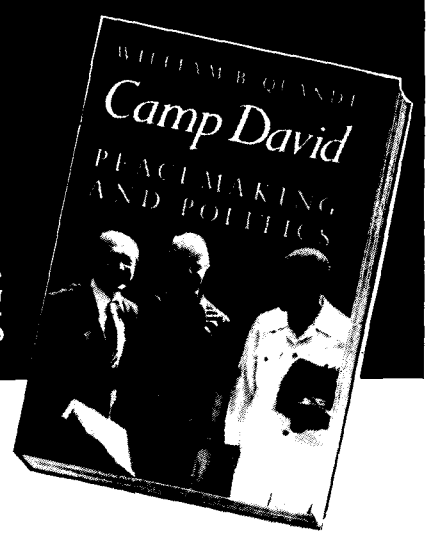
MUCH of the advice which came to Pétain was far from subordinate to the Nazis. But the role of Vichy toward the Jews was different, a product both of Nazi pressure and of the willing response of old-style French anti-Semitism of the sort which the aged Charles Maurras (ironically a hater of all Germans) had been preaching through the *Action Française* for fifty years. As Lottman has it, "Pétain himself was not an anti-Semite but not an anti-anti-Semite either." He had Jewish friends in his prewar circle and he had always, despite political differences, admired the socialist Léon Blum, a premier of France in the 30's. The slogan of the prewar French Right had been "better Hitler than Blum," a wish savagely realized.

As for passing laws against the Jews, Vichy preempted German requirements. The Alibert laws, named after the Minister of Justice, Raphael Alibert, defined a Jew as somebody with three Jewish grandparents. A Jew so defined was barred from public office, from the rank of officer in the armed services, and from teaching; Jews were also barred from owning or being employed in newspapers, films, theater, or radio. A second decree authorized the putting of foreign-born Jews into special camps. When petitioned on this point by a leading rabbi, Pétain drearily replied, "Obedience to the law is one of the essential principles of all states and one of the indispensable conditions for France's recovery."

Still another decree established a commission for the Jews and put in charge of it one Xavier Vallat, a vituperative anti-Semitic propagandist who had played a great part in the hate campaign against Léon Blum's government. Vallat was to shock Pétain by his virulence, but the old man let him be replaced by Louis Darquier de Pellepoix, indistinguishable from the Nazis and one whom Pétain would later address as "Mr. Torturer."

In assessing the role of Pétain in these matters it is hard to see where feebleness ends and indifference begins. By the standards of the awful crew to be assembled at Vichy, Pétain could not be considered a man who actively wished for such evils. But it is also true that on the Jewish issue Pétain and Pierre Laval, a more vigorous collaborator who was to assume most of the Marshal's powers in 1942, took a similar line (despite their quarrels and other differences). They were concerned to protect specifically *French* Jews, as Frenchmen, from deportation and death, but were ultimately willing

Camp David
PEACEMAKING AND POLITICS



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to pay for them with indifference to non-French Jews. This was of a piece with the ragged cloak of chauvinism which warmed the body of a defeated country anxious to differentiate itself from an occupied country.

THERE is, to be sure, a case to be made, both in terms of mitigating the evils of a direct occupation and in terms of Allied strategy, for the existence of Pétain's kingdom with its preposterous cult of the Marshal. The distinction between French Jews and foreign Jews, in its degrading, ignominious way, was worth some human lives. And strategically, the British Foreign Office in 1940 rightly feared an early offer by Hitler of all North Africa to Spain in return for Franco's assistance to the Axis. The existence of the dead lump of Vichy kept a German army off the Pyrenees and helped the Spanish regent toward a wise procrastination.

But where Franco had a real hand to play and withhold, Pétain was driven back on rationalization and on playing at kingship. Not that the French disliked this state of affairs. The mail censors, kept very busy in Vichy France, reported as late as January 1944 that of opinions collated from opened letters and overheard telephone conversations, there were 46 expressions of hostility to Pétain, 55 of compassion, and 1,810 of confidence and faith.

Lottman offers a quotation from a children's book, one of many pieces of sycophancy and state propaganda put out at the time. It describes the old man sitting under an oak tree giving good advice: "And as he spoke, all the horrible bugs, all the spiders, all the termites, all the vermin who had done so much harm to France, left the soil of the Fatherland in great haste." For all the dispassion of Lottman's account, the sordid, brutal selfishness of the regime and of the nation which embraced it become clear enough. France at this time leaves an evil taste in the mouth.

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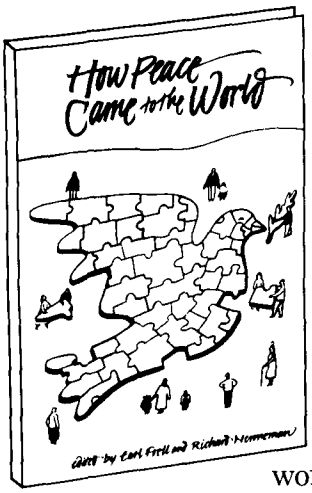

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Richies & Regulars

POLITICS. By EDWARD I. KOCH with WILLIAM RAUCH. *Simon and Schuster. 255 pp. $17.95.*

Reviewed by ERIC M. BREINDEL

Politics is a rambling, highly personal, and exceedingly funny account of the battles of Edward I. Koch, written by Koch together with his press secretary, William Rauch (who also co-authored their earlier and best-selling *Mayor*). The story begins with Koch's entry into public life as part of the New York Democratic reform movement of the late 1950's and early 1960's and follows him as he learns, and masters, the art of politics.

After an early defeat in a 1962 bid for the New York State Assem-

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bly, Koch ran up a string of victories, moving, in succession, from party leadership to the City Council to Congress. In 1977, on the heels of a dramatic victory over Mario Cuomo in the Democratic primary run-off, Koch became Mayor of the City of New York, the post to which he has twice now been reelected and in which he has achieved national, if not international, fame.

Along the way to his present eminence, Koch came to understand and practice clubhouse politics, ethnic politics, constituent politics, and media politics. He discovered, for instance, that those whom he endorsed did not always consider themselves obliged to return the favor, a lesson driven home by John V. Lindsay who refused to back Koch in his 1968 congressional campaign—indeed, Lindsay endorsed Koch's opponent—notwithstanding the fact that Koch had jumped party lines to support Lindsay for mayor in 1965. Koch also grew to realize that those who had pledged to contribute to his campaigns did not always deliver the promised funds. Most importantly, in the period chronicled here Koch himself underwent something of a political metamorphosis.

Koch's friends and foes over what is now a nearly quarter-century-long public career have been many and varied, but prominent among them have been the two groups he here calls the "richies" and the "regulars." His disaffection with the former and gradual recognition of the virtues of the latter are at the heart of the political transformation that is detailed in *Politics*.

The "regulars" are members of the old New York City Democratic organization, epitomized by the legendary party boss, Carmine DeSapio, and by the name Tammany Hall. It was in a crusade against this organization—and political tradition—that Koch began his political career. His allies at the time were the Democratic reformers, many of whom he now dubs "richies"—liberal-to-radical Manhattanites, mainly though not exclusively Jewish. According to Koch today, these are people who want others to "pay their dues." During the Lindsay administration, for example, they wanted middle- and lower-middle-class Jews in Forest Hills, Queens, to allow a low-income housing project to be built in their neighborhood while the "richies" themselves stayed safely ensconced on Lower Fifth Avenue.

Koch, of course, has had other adversaries—like David Rockefeller of the Chase Manhattan bank, whose criticism of U.S. support for Israel so rankled Congressman Koch that he handed out literature rebuking Rockefeller at subway stations. Still, in this book the theme that predominates is reformers versus regulars—a theme that gives the book the flavor of a political odyssey from Left to Right reminiscent of several other recent autobiographical works.

There is a critical distinction, however: the author of this book is

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not a New York intellectual but rather a public man who throughout the period in question was seeking and holding elective office. In one sense, this circumstance makes the transformation he recounts more significant—Koch has, after all, been in a position of actual power. But in another sense it makes it less complete. As a politician, Koch must retain the support of diverse constituencies, and this is a fact which encourages "pragmatism" at the expense of ideology. Then, too, the politician is often encumbered by a perceived need to project consistency (although Koch is better than almost anyone else in public life at the simple words, "I've changed my mind").

KOCH's explanation of how and why he came to dislike his early allies, and to respect his original adversaries, is disarmingly candid:

> Now let me tell you about my feelings about reformers and regulars in New York City. I like regulars as human beings better than I do reformers. I like conservatives as human beings better than I do liberals. Philosophically I agree with the reformers more than I do with the regulars and I agree with the liberals more than I do with the conservatives. But as human beings, reformers and liberals care comparatively little about human beings except in the abstract. They love them in the abstract: they just don't like them in the particular.

About one reformer-friend, the one who (with his "marvelous home in the Hamptons") pronounced that the Jews in Forest Hills ought to "pay their dues," Koch is positively vituperative:

> He didn't care about that poor guy who spends his whole life getting his family to Forest Hills in order to get out of a section of Brooklyn which was falling apart or a slum in the Bronx. He doesn't care that that guy has worked his whole life to give his kids a better life. He doesn't care about that—no. What he cares about is some utopia down the road. That's what reformers and liberals are talking about.

It was this insight into the liberal mentality—and the political sensibility it gave rise to—that led Koch to distinguish himself from other liberals. Calling himself "a liberal with sanity," he went on record, over time, as opposing affirmative-action quotas, favoring the death penalty, and supporting tuition-tax credits for the parents of children enrolled in parochial schools. In 1981 he went so far as to seek the mayoral nomination on the Republican as well as the Democratic line, and to reject the support of the Liberal party.

The evolution of these views, and of the willingness to express them, required not a little courage on the part of a man who had represented—in his party, in the City Council, and in Congress—the heart of liberalism. And that courage led to a willingness to address the subject of race, even though this meant, inevitably, being labeled a "racist." In the course of his recent campaign for a third term, Koch was compelled to spend a good deal of undignified time denying this slander, and not just before left-wing demagogues but also to audiences of generally well-meaning voters. To read in this book his account of a 1964 sojourn in Mississippi as a civil-rights lawyer (others have testified to his personal tenacity and actual physical bravery in that period) is to realize just how demeaning and offensive those recent encounters must have been.

To be sure, the charge of racism is sometimes triggered by Koch's own propensity to be impolitic. He has, for instance, described Congressman Ronald Dellums as a Zulu warrior; he has advanced the notion that most blacks are anti-Semitic; and, even in this book, he allows that former Congressman Herman Badillo, having "married two Jewish women . . . [is] no more Puerto Rican than I am." But the more serious among those who charge Koch with racism generally have something else in mind: Koch's often-stated belief that despite what many black politicians and their white supporters say, the salient factor behind social strife in urban America is not race at all, but class. On this issue Koch is concise, articulate, and true to his mandate as a liberal with sanity: "Those who are obsessed with race, on the Right and on the Left, ignore class as a determinant of social attitudes. They are wrong, and they do an injustice to whites, blacks, and Hispanics."

Because *Politics* is, as Koch intends, an introduction to his political philosophy, one wishes that it had fewer moments of unnecessary pettiness. Most of the anecdotes seized upon by the press in the flurry of pre-publication publicity—such as Koch's decision not to reappoint the brother of Comptroller Harrison J. Goldin to the Board of Higher Education, despite the Comptroller's pleas—have little or no bearing on the essential message of this book. More distressing is Koch's likening of a 1969 battle between patrons of a homosexual social club and members of the New York Police Department Vice Squad—an event which has taken on mythic significance in the lore of the homosexual-rights movement—to the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. But these missteps are very much the exception in what remains a serious and important book by a major figure on the national political scene.

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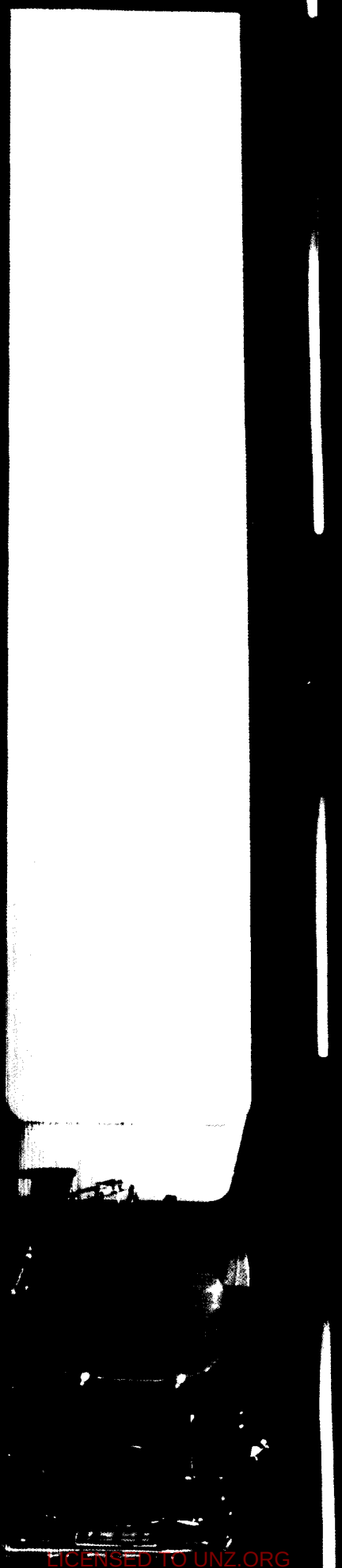

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